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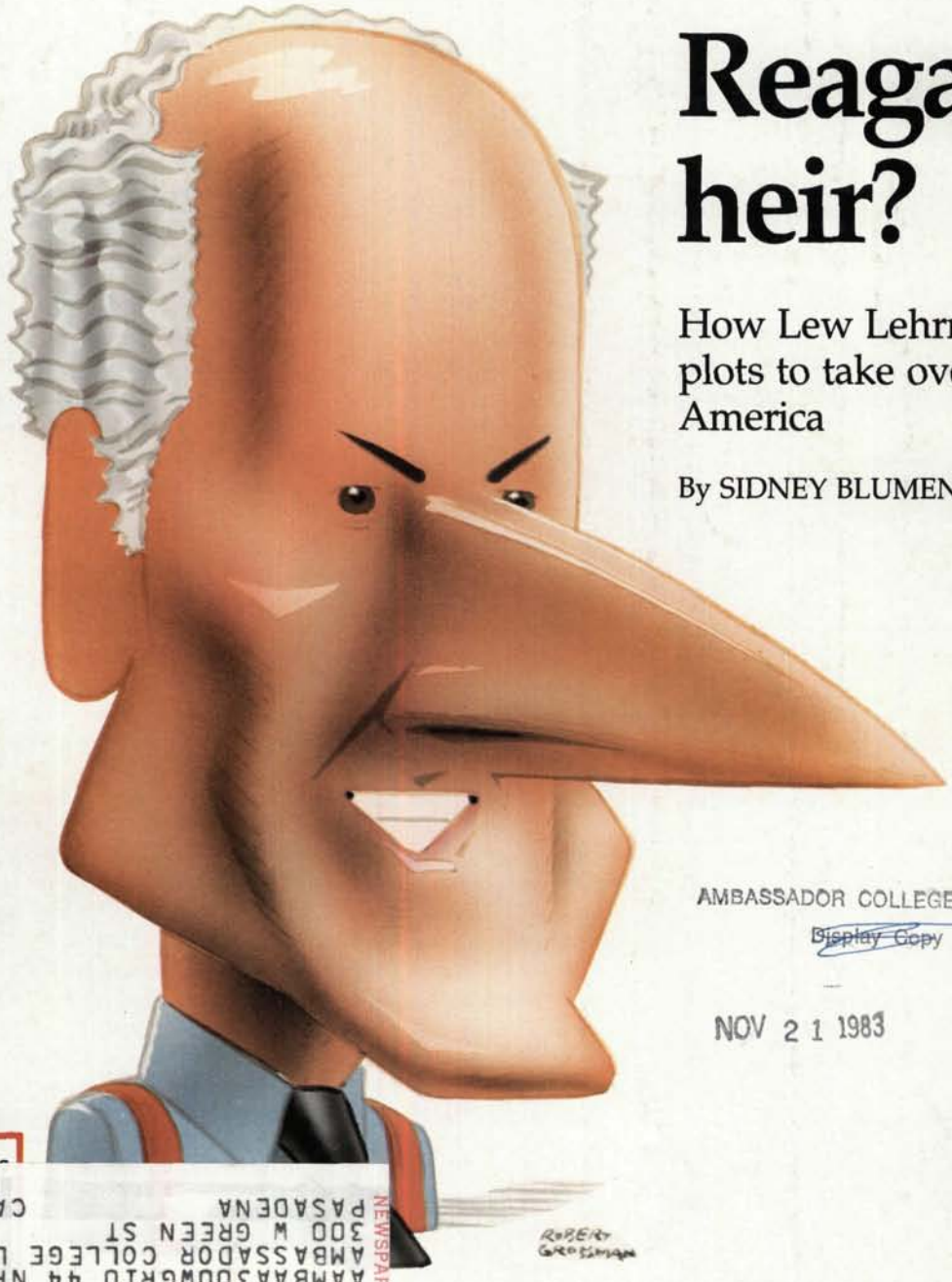

Reagan's heir?

How Lew Lehrman plots to take over America

By SIDNEY BLUMENTHAL

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CORRESPONDENCE

SCHOOL RUMINATIONS

To the editors:

Leon Botstein, in his article "Why Jonathan Can't Read" (TNR, November 7), talks of the need for a more rigorous writing program in the nation's schools. Diane Ravitch cites James B. Conant's *The Education of American Teachers* in "Scapegoating The Teachers" in the same issue.

Neither recalls that one of Mr. Conant's major tenets was that high school English teachers be given no more than one hundred students a term to teach. If writing assignments are to be frequently given and carefully reviewed, as Mr. Botstein urges, English teachers must be able to establish a laboratory setting for their classes, similar to the setting for classes in the sciences. Science laboratory classes have been operating with smaller pupil loads for decades.

ELAINE ADAMENKO
Teaneck, New Jersey

To the editors:

Dorothy Wickenden is right ("Merit Pay Won't Work," TNR, November 7), but in addition to citing a handful of failed attempts in the schools, why not look at the massive data generated by merit pay in the Civil Service? Administrative and managerial jobs are, in important aspects, like teaching: people are the "raw material," "outputs" are hard to measure, and individual efforts are entangled with the actions of uncontrolled others. Not surprisingly, what most Civil Service managers tell you about merit pay will probably match, point for point, Wickenden's report on the school-tested examples: morale has suffered; there are no fewer tenured incompetents, and there is more paperwork than most sane people could ever conceive of.

What seems like such a reasonable proposition—that it is possible to judge a teacher's effectiveness fairly—is simply impossible in the absence of shared values and mutual trust. In a litigious society already strained by its inability to hold common values, the rich, subtle, subjective language of description and assessment required by teaching are probably culturally, and certainly legally, inapplicable.

It is in great part the absence of shared values that produces the call for "objective" measures of performance, which turn out to be the lowest common denominators of any experience—that is, things which (we hope) nobody can disagree about. The result, of course, is that we measure what is measurable, not what is important. In the schoolroom that means neatness and thoroughness of lesson plans, just as in the Civil Service it has meant the number of reports submitted on time. In trying to take each other's measure, we are only forcing each other to go through empty motions. The task is to win agreement about values and is beyond the technical solution proposed by the performance appraisal expert.

CHARLES JACOBS
Brookline, Massachusetts

WHOSE PROVINCIALISM?

To the editors:

Although I dislike Jim Watt as much as the next environmentalist, I cringed at Eleanor Randolph's explanation of his behavior as resulting from his small-town upbringing in Wyoming ("The Watt That Was," TNR, October 31). I happen to know a great many Wyomingites who indeed think that their state is "what America was." It has clean air, a closeness to nature, and a slower-paced, more neighborly lifestyle. There is a deep respect for Wyoming as a magnificent natural place, with special aesthetic qualities which Wyomingites feel uniquely privileged to share in.

Ms. Randolph's portrayal of life in Wyoming as a hard, narrow provincialism, where "it is not corny . . . to love the flag, to talk about America, and to pray in public" says more, I'm afraid, about why liberals are held in such disrepute in some quarters than about what's wrong with Jim Watt. If liberals continue to believe that all of America's wisdom and light are confined to either coast, and that religion, patriotism, "talk of America," and a preference for a rural lifestyle are somehow problematical in these modern times, then they will continue to occupy only their own narrow frequency on the political spectrum.

DAVID ALBERSWERTH
Washington, D.C.

ROSENBERG BRIEF

To the editors:

THE NEW REPUBLIC has seen fit to single out the Fund For Open Information and Accountability, Inc., for attack because it has not joined in the chorus of approval of Ronald Radosh and Joyce Milton's *The Rosenberg File* ("The Radosh-Milton File," TNR, October 31). It is ironic that you would charge F.O.I.A., Inc., with McCarthyism when it is your editorial that uses the McCarthyite tactic of trying to intimidate and taint individuals with charges that are totally false. Where does the Rosenberg case fit into all this? The same place it did in the 1950s. Those who support the Radosh-Milton interpretation want another execution to establish their own anti-Communist credentials and to purge others who are not interested in gaining that kind of respectability. THE NEW REPUBLIC et al. are using the case to disrupt those who disagree with them.

Let us look at THE NEW REPUBLIC's charges: (1.) F.O.I.A., Inc., did not take, and does not take, any position on the guilt or innocence of the Rosenbergs, or on the accuracy of the Radosh-Milton book. (2.) What you call the "pamphlet" issued by F.O.I.A., Inc., is in fact our regular quarterly magazine, *Our Right to Know*. The current issue is devoted to the Rosenberg case, not just the Radosh-Milton book, because that case remains the largest F.O.I.A. file yet released by the government. (3.) All the articles in the magazine were signed by scholars and researchers which reflect *their* views and not those of the organization. (4.) One of the articles you single out was by Ann Marie Buitrago, who was formerly Research Director at F.O.I.A., Inc., and was intimately familiar with the contents of the files. Her main point was that Radosh and Milton consistently misused and distorted what was in the files. Unfortunately, the reviewers who "emphasized the book's sensitivity to the evidence" were not familiar with the files. You may find Buitrago's and others' findings upsetting but we would suggest that your readers examine *Our Right to Know* and decide for themselves.

WILLIAM PRESTON JR.
President, F.O.I.A., Inc.
New York, New York

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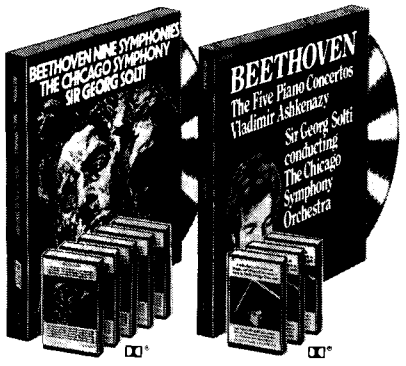

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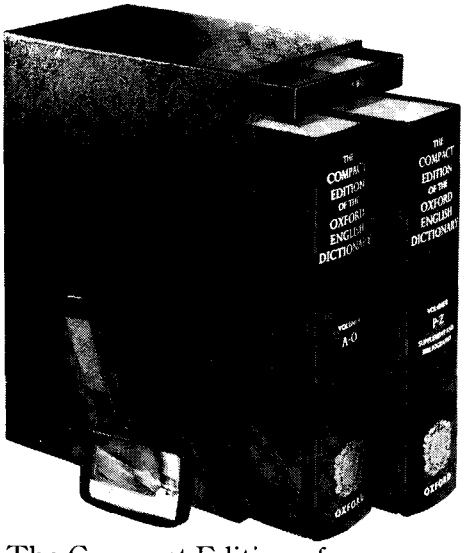

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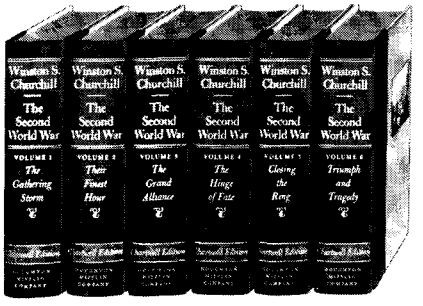

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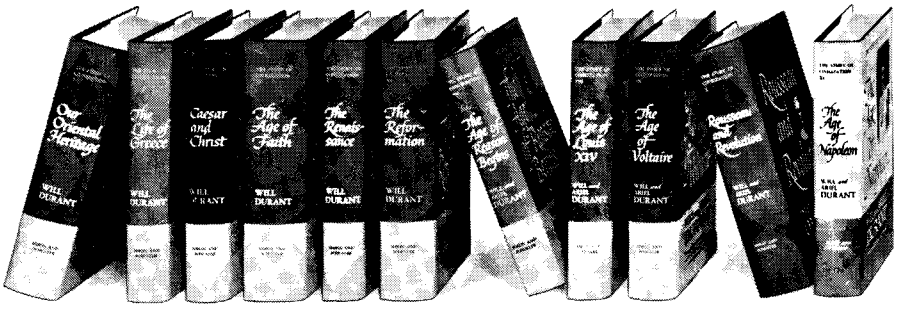

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FROM WASHINGTON

THE BATTLE OF WHO CARES

You may have read or heard something about the big dust-up between the television networks and the Hollywood studios over a Federal Communications Commission ruling about syndication of old TV shows, and you may have thought, "Now what's *that* all about?," without really wanting to know. Don't panic, I'm not here to tell you.

The usual function of Washington commentators like TRB is to shame you into taking interest in some tedious controversy by asserting that it is vital to the future of the republic. Media scolds have even accused the networks of *covering up* this particular matter because of their vested interest in it, with the result that minutes of precious air time have been devoted to incomprehensible but scrupulously balanced summaries. Having shouldered the burden of tedium on your behalf and studied the matter in detail, I can report that in truth it is of almost no importance. Take a free pass: good citizens can ignore this one in good conscience.

But, if you insist.

What's interesting (if anything) is that the whole business not only doesn't matter to the future of the republic, it doesn't even matter much to the parties involved. Yet each side has spent millions of dollars, oceans of ink, and lobbyist-years of precious time battling over it. Why? These marathon battles of legislation take on a life of their own. As trade associations have flourished, as corporate Washington offices have opened and expanded, as high-priced lobbyists and political strategists have set up shop, these skilled professionals at twisting the political process have little incentive to stop and ask, "Is this really worth the fuss?"

Here is what the fuss is about. (I lied when I said I wasn't going to tell you.) Since 1970, the F.C.C. has forbidden the three commercial networks from owning the shows they broadcast or the rights to sell these programs for other uses such as non-network reruns and showing abroad. Essentially all they can do is buy the right to broadcast these programs themselves. The idea was to encourage a wider variety of sources for TV programming.

The F.C.C. has been restudying these rules since 1977—that is, for almost half the time they have been in effect. In August it announced its "Tentative Decision" (why rush into anything?) that the rules hadn't increased television variety and should be repealed. This mightily upset the major Hollywood producers. They do a lucrative business both producing shows for the networks and financing shows by smaller independent producers. The Motion Picture Association brought movie stars to roam the halls of Congress asking for legislation to overturn this decision. Both sides bought expensive former officials and newspaper ads, and generally carried on as if the future of American civilization were at stake. Finally the M.P.A. played its trump card by getting the support of a former movie star in the White House. It now appears likely that the repeal will be delayed or abandoned.

For what it's worth, the networks are right. Whenever you hear corporations insisting, like the Hollywood producers in this case, that the government should outlaw their competition in order to increase competition, it's almost always a phony argument. Phony arguments in Washington often come packaged in slogans that seem to endorse precisely what they oppose, and the name chosen for the producers' front group is a classic: the "Committee for Prudent Deregulation," no less.

The networks do have a monopoly on prime time (though a fading one), but they really have no reason to use their clout to wipe out competition in the production of TV shows. They're much better off if the market for selling shows to them is as wide open as possible. Producing new TV shows is a risky business, and most of the potential profit is in future uses rather than the initial network showing. Letting the networks buy a piece of this action adds to the

continued on page 40

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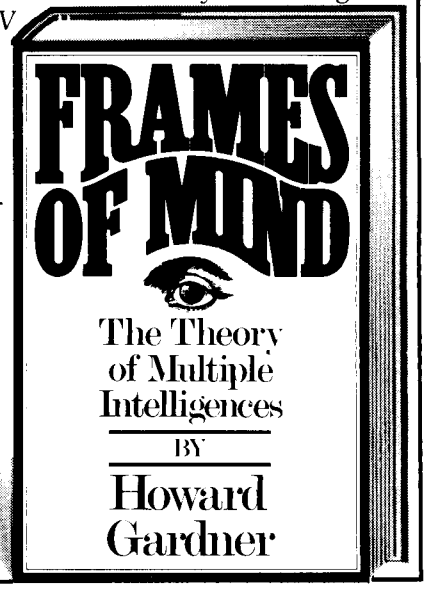

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Back Issues and Reception
CATHI E. STALLINGS

2 **CORRESPONDENCE** ..... On education, the Rosenbergs, and James Watt.

4 **TRB FROM WASHINGTON** ..... THE BATTLE OF WHO CARES

7 **THE EDITORS** ..... WINDOW DRESSING
The decals may be pretty; the housing policy's not.
NOTEBOOK

9 **MURRAY SAYLE** ..... GOOD BUDDIES
President Reagan's visit to the Japanese outpost of empire shows Ron and Yasu to be real friendly-like.

11 **EDWARD MORTIMER** ..... TURKEY TALKS BACK
A half-free election gives the generals a jolt.

13 **PAUL ATTANASIO** ..... BIG BANG, LITTLE BOX
Back to Armageddon in a moment. First this message.

15 **SIDNEY BLUMENTHAL** ..... LET LEHRMAN BE REAGAN
The struggle for the Republican succession to Reagan has begun. The most determined pretender is Lewis E. Lehrman, drugstore magnate, would-be governor of New York, and head of Citizens for America, a new group that plans to install Reaganism—permanently.

20 **STANLEY KAUFFMANN** ..... ON FILMS: COLD, HOT, TEPID
Never Cry Wolf is a blend of beauty and baloney; *Carmen* is electric but Peckinpah's latest isn't.

CHRISTMAS BOOKS

22 **ERNEST GELLNER** ..... MOHAMMED AND MODERNITY
In the Path of God: Islam and Political Power by Daniel Pipes

24 **IRVING FELDMAN** ..... POEM *Our Father*

27 **ANNE TYLER** ..... END OF A LOVE AFFAIR
Pitch Dark by Renata Adler

28 **SIMON SCHAMA** ..... THE CHURCHILLIAD
Finest Hour: Winston S. Churchill 1939-1941 by Martin Gilbert

32 **LEON WIESELTIER** ..... MIDNIGHT'S OTHER CHILDREN
Shame by Salman Rushdie

34 **DAVID BROMWICH** ..... THE WAY TO AUTUMN
The Odes of John Keats by Helen Vendler

38 **MICHAEL KINSLEY** ..... MEET BOB FOREHEAD
Washingtoon by Mark Alan Stamaty

39 **EUGENE J. MCCARTHY** ..... TEN LAUGHS
The Best of Modern Humor edited by Mordecai Richler

43 **PARIS DIARIST** ..... CRADLES TO GRAVES

COVER by Robert Grossman for THE NEW REPUBLIC. Article on page 15.

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WINDOW DRESSING

President Reagan got some political mileage—or, more precisely, footage—out of the Bronx during his Presidential campaign. On August 5, 1980, he visited a spot in that unhappy borough which Jimmy Carter had toured in 1977 and scored points by showing that Mr. Carter had failed to rehabilitate the neighborhood as promised. In the TV debate, Mr. Reagan struck again. "You have to see it to believe it," he said. "It looks like a bombed-out city—great gaunt skeletons of buildings, windows smashed out, painted on one of them 'unkept promises,' on another, 'despair.' This was the spot at which Mr. Carter was going to bring in a vast program to rebuild. . . . There are whole blocks of land that are left bare—just bulldozed down flat. Nothing has been done and they are now charging to take tourists through there to see this terrible desolation."

Mr. Reagan was duly elected, and no one can say he's done nothing for the Bronx. As *The New York Times* reported on November 12, his Administration is providing New York City with $300,000 to improve the image of various neighborhoods, including the Bronx—by pasting cheerful vinyl decals over the smashed, gaping windows of abandoned buildings. The buildings will remain the great gaunt skeletons they were, the promises will remain unkept, the despair will remain unrelieved, but drivers on the Cross Bronx Expressway will no longer have their sensibilities ruffled, because windows facing the road—and only those windows, not the ones Bronx residents see—will be covered up by pictures of shutters, venetian blinds, and potted plants.

New York's mayor, Edward I. Koch, invented the decal program, but it is a direct outgrowth of Mr. Reagan's policies and a perfect metaphor for his Administration's effort to paint a smile on the face of bitter reality. To restore the abandoned buildings of New York, Mayor Koch observed, would cost "hundreds of millions of dollars." Even to knock down the average abandoned building in the Bronx would cost $30,000 to $40,000, money the city hasn't got. But a decal costs only $50. Lacking any hope of obtaining the funds required for rehabilitating the Bronx—thanks in no small part to Mr. Reagan—Mr. Koch has had to resort to Potemkinism and philosophizing. "In a neighborhood, as in life," he told the *Times*, "a clean bandage is much, much better than a raw or festering wound."

The trouble is, in this case the wound the bandage covers won't heal. Of all the federal government's programs designed to help the poor, housing has been slated by the Reagan Administration for the deepest cuts. In fiscal 1981, when Mr. Carter's policies were still in effect, the federal government obligated $30 billion for future spending on low-income housing programs. The Reagan Administration slashed that to $17.3 billion in 1982, to $8.7 billion in 1983—and to a proposed $515 million in new budget authority for fiscal 1984. Allowing for inflation, Mr. Reagan was proposing to spend 1.3 percent of the amount that President Ford called for in his Administration's final budget.

Confronted with such figures, spokesmen for this Administration make three points: (1.) that spending for all housing programs has risen during the Reagan years; (2.) that the Reagan budgets have not imposed cuts in outlays for low-income housing programs; and (3.) that in negotiations with Congress the Administration has agreed to maintain adequate funding levels for the future. These claims are as deceiving as the decals along the Cross Bronx Expressway.

The major items of federal housing expenditures are not rent subsidies and other low-income programs, but lending and mortgage insurance programs, mainly for middle-income persons, and tax expenditures, especially homeowner mortgage interest and property tax deductions. Under the Reagan budgets, F.H.A. mortgage credits for moderate-income persons have declined, but tax subsidies for homeowners have exploded—by 62 percent since fiscal 1980, mainly because of high interest rates. Mr. Reagan complained in 1980 about the trouble young families have in fulfilling the American dream of home ownership. The 1982 Reagan recession all but destroyed that dream for millions of working-class people, and his budget deficits—brought on by tax cuts skewed to the rich—will keep interest rates high and housing out of reach.

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Actual outlays to support lower-income housing programs have not collapsed. They amounted to $4.5 billion in fiscal 1980 and to $7.7 billion in 1983, and were budgeted by Mr. Reagan for $10.8 billion in 1984. These numbers, however, do not represent any generosity on the part of the Reagan Administration, but fulfillment of obligations entered into by the Ford and Carter Administrations. The Reagan Administration has tried to limit future obligations practically to zero. It has not succeeded only because Congress has refused to go along—Senate Republicans as well as House Democrats. Last year, Congress insisted on $8.7 billion in new funding of low-income housing programs and this year it appropriated $10.9 billion. Instead of cutting back on the number of housing units the government helps pay for, Congress has added three hundred and fifty thousand units over three years. The Administration has succeeded in blocking virtually all new housing construction, however.

The fact is that America needs new low-income housing units. According to the 1982 report of the President's Commission on Housing, about 7.5 million families have incomes 50 percent below the national average but do not get government aid in paying their rent. The picture looks even worse in matching the number of low-income households with the number of housing units available to them at rents they can afford. According to the Low Income Housing Information Service, a Washington clearinghouse, there are 1.5 million more households with incomes under $3,000 per year than there are affordable places for such families to live. There are 2 million such families in the income range of $3,000 to $5,000 per year.

It's not quite fair to say that Mr. Reagan has proposed nothing to deal with the nation's low-income housing problem or the plight of urban slums. He has tried to get Congress to enact a program called Enterprise Zones—areas in which corporations would receive tax breaks when they established a business or built housing. But these zones are not likely to expand the number of housing units or employment opportunities actually available in the country; if tax breaks of this kind accomplish anything, a debatable proposition in itself (see "States at War" by Tina Rosenberg, TNR, October 3), it's to induce employers or builders to redistribute investments from undesignated needy areas to designated ones. For that reason, among others, Congress has refused to enact Mr. Reagan's plan.

Thanks to the ingenuity of the chairman of the House Banking Committee, Fernand St. Germain of Rhode Island, Mr. Reagan apparently is about to accede to passage of a new $15.6 billion housing authorization bill providing for construction of more than twenty thousand new housing units and establishing machinery for more new construction in future years. Mr. St. Germain has won this victory by tying the housing bill to the Administration's request for $8.4 billion to expand International Monetary Fund lending authority, an item the Administration deems necessary to save the world banking system from collapse.

Another election year approaches, and Mr. Reagan may be expected to claim credit for Mr. St. Germain's housing bill. Voters, though, should remember the catch: it was forced upon him. He may claim that spending to house the poor is up, but he tried to cut it to zero, and he also tried to raise the rents that poor tenants pay in subsidized housing. Mr. Reagan may even take a camera crew back to the South Bronx and show off the repainted apartment building and the ninety new ranch houses at the site where Mr. Carter was unable to produce any improvements. But here again there is a catch the voters should remember: those improvements were made under a program—Urban Development Action Grants—started by Mr. Carter. They should also remember that elsewhere in the Bronx, scenes of desolation are being vinyled over to give suburban commuters peace of mind.

NOTEBOOK

□ THERE HAVE BEEN many Aristideses in history. One of the most important was Aristides, called Aristides the Just, who commanded a contingent at the Battle of Marathon. One of the least important is Aristides, let's call him Aristides the Unjust, who writes an editorial column in *The American Scholar*. That is Phi Beta Kappa's quarterly journal, consecrated to the Emersonian echoes of its name, but lately also to more particular and petty principles. In the current issue Aristides has a column called "Let Us Now Praise Famous Knuckleheads," a rumination on academic recommendations and more generally on the problem of praise. Our cranky and cultivated columnist writes in passing of "a literary critic, a woman in her seventies," who refused to provide references for a fellowship application on the ground that her work of half a century should refer itself. "I think she is correct," Aristides says; "her quality is apparent, and on the basis of it . . . I should have turned down her application." It is not clear what political or philosophical analysis requires this insult to Diana Trilling. The neoconservative one, apparently. It appears that Mrs. Trilling's kind of cold war liberalism is not cold war enough. God protect teachers from the anger of their students. Since neoconservatives frequently (and sometimes rightly) complain about people getting personal, we adduce this little poisoned arrow of Aristides. Writing in *Dissent* ten years ago, the critic Joseph Epstein accused "the new conservatives" of forgetting that there is "social meanness" in America. His point is still good.

□ FIFTY YEARS AGO IN THE NEW REPUBLIC: "Ever since the Spanish War, our State Department has anticipated each succeeding Pan-American Conference with foreboding and dread. In actual fact, our delegates have always succeeded in choking off formal discussion of our many crimes in Central America and the Caribbean. This year

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our delegation is going to Montevideo with a relatively bright record. At last we have withdrawn our Marines from Nicaragua. Our administrative control over the Dominican Republic has been largely relaxed, and Secretary Hull a few weeks ago frustrated what appeared to be an attempt by the Navy Department to tighten it up again. The most important evidence we have to show of good intentions, however, is the reinterpretation of the Monroe Doctrine made some time ago by former Ambassador J. Reuben Clark. The so-called Roosevelt corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, under which old Theodore pretended to justify forcible intervention in the Caribbean, is henceforth definitely repudiated." ("Yanqui Imperialismo," The Editors, December 6, 1933.)

Ron and Yasu and Nancy and Ivy.

GOOD BUDDIES

Tokyo

"MOST FRIENDSHIPS, sir," said Dr. Samuel Johnson to his pushy young friend Boswell, "are mere leagues in vice, or conspiracies in folly." Political friendships do indeed seem to have a way of ending stickily for one or both of the partners: look at Ché and Fidel, Benito and Adolf, Dick and Spiro, even Menachem and Anwar. How are things looking, then, for the latest double act on the international scene, President Ronald Reagan and the prime minister of Japan, Yasuhiro Nakasone?

On the personal level, it seems, fine. During the President's recent state visit to Japan, it was still "Hi, Ron" and "Hi, Yasu" (a style we might adopt here, to save space); and now, we are told, their wives find that they hit it off too, and have agreed to call each other "Nancy" and "Ivy"—the latter not a snide reference to wallflowers but a rough translation of Mrs. Nakasone's given name, Tsutako. Breaking the Japanese tradition of not inviting foreigners to one's home, the Nakasones even had the Reagans over for lunch at the prime minister's modest weekender in the mountains near Tokyo—an intimacy reinforced, if anything, by the presence of seven thousand policemen, two hundred TV people and reporters, and the inevitable Marine carrying the briefcase in which Ron keeps the Key to the Big Button.

The ways of friendship, like other forms of love, are strange. As buddies, Yasu and Ron don't go all that far back—they seem in fact, to have trodden their respective stages on opposite sides of the Pacific ignorant of each other's existence until last January, when Yasu, newly elected prime minister, made the customary pilgrimage to Washington. His performance, however, smashed the traditional mold, possibly forever. To begin with, Yasu expressed himself in passable English. Also, he shook every hand that was offered, with none of that Oriental-type bowing nonsense. Yasu described the U.S.-Japanese relationship as an "alliance" of nations "bound together by a common destiny"—terms that have not been heard in Japan since they were used about Germany and Italy, back when Yasu was serving as a lieutenant (j.g.) in the old Imperial Japanese Navy. Then, at the Williamsburg economic summit in May, Yasu stood shoulder to shoulder with Ron in demanding world free trade, while devious Europeans on the other side of the table squirmed guiltily. All this, we can now see, alerted Ron to the emergence of a brother square shooter. He thus arrived in Tokyo last week with a definite feeling of obligation—a debt, between friends, to be discharged.

The friends have, of course, one or two friendly bones to pick. "We may have periodic disputes," Ron, resplendent in a claw hammer coat, told the Japanese Parliament, "but the real quarrel is not between us." As it happens, several of these perennial disputes are active at the moment—one of them being, as you guessed, trade. Japan had a trade surplus with the United States last year of $19.8 billion, is shooting for $25 billion this year, and may touch $30 billion in the witching year 1984. Is Japan, with 2.5 percent out of work, exporting unemployment to the United States, where it's more like 10 percent? Is this the way to treat a pal?

The sorest spot of all is cars, symbol of American industrial virility. Nine days before Ron's visit, in a concession Yasu called "regrettable, but inevitable under the circumstances," Japan agreed to exercise "voluntary restraint" and hold automobile exports to the United States to 1.85 million next year, up slightly from the 1.68 million limit "voluntarily" agreed to by the Japanese for the past three years. This is still, however, some 20 percent of the U.S. car market—an interesting contrast to the thirty thousand American-made cars sold in Japan last year, mostly to gangsters and show-business types. On this showing the Japanese automobile industry would simply seem to be the more efficient.

In agriculture the reverse, at least in caloric terms, is true: Japan's agriculture is primitive, America's leads the world. Here, to free traders of the school of Ron and Yasu, a simple solution to the trade problem presents itself. The same thought has occurred to Mr. W. J. ("Dub") Waldrip of Lubbock, Texas, president of the National Cattlemen's Association, who took the opportunity of the Presidential visit to write an article for the *Japan Times* headed, MAKE JAPAN FAT, HAPPY WITH MORE U.S. BEEF IMPORTS. (Japanese *do* tend to be thinner than Americans, but this is usually attributed to working harder.) American trade officials have, indeed, designated beef and oranges from Florida and California as areas in which Japan could most readily begin redressing the trade imbalance. To be sure, even if Japan achieved American levels of beef eating, orange juice drinking, obesity, and heart attacks, it would knock only $500 million off the trade surplus. But it's the principle that counts.

This is exactly the point made by Shizuma Iwamochi,

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president of the Union of Japanese Agricultural Cooperatives. "We extend our heartfelt welcome to President Ronald Reagan," said President Iwamochi. "However, I would like to make it quite clear that if he wants to take home the opening of the Japanese market for American farm products as a 'souvenir' from Japan, he will not get it. The difference in the power of agriculture between Japan and the United States is like a rat grappling with a giant elephant in the sumo match."

My money would have to be on the rat, especially when the match is staged in the Japanese Diet. More than half the parliamentary members of Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party belong to agricultural lobbying groups. Yasu has made it known that there will be no concessions on beef or oranges to anyone while he is prime minister. Should King Kong, in a presumably hypothetical case, be elected President of the United States, the Japanese would no doubt greet him ceremoniously with biscuits and bananas, and give an equally firm "no" when he offered American beef and oranges.

THAT BRINGS US to defense, another crack in the golden bowl of U.S.-Japanese amity. "The defense of freedom should be a shared burden," Ron told the assembled Japanese legislators, with Yasu, on the front bench, beaming friendly agreement. But Japan, as we know, spends proportionately only a fifth of what Americans do on what is known, under their Mutual Security Treaty, as the common defense. And Yasu's budget actually provides for a smaller increase in defense spending than that of his bumbling, Carter-like predecessor, Zenko Suzuki. Can't a friend do better than that?

"No," said Yasu, adding, "Japan has done all that we can be expected to do, given our fiscal and budgetary restraints." Can Japan really be short of money? The Japanese government runs a bigger budgetary deficit, as a proportion of G.N.P., than the American one. Why not raise taxes, among the lowest in the industrial world? Because that approach promises to be unpopular with the voters. Yasu, in fact, has a tax reduction plan in the works.

Besides, do Americans really want Japan rearmed? While Ron was hinting "yes" in Tokyo, Dr. Henry Kissinger, in Sydney, was warning of the danger of "a kind of nationalism which would fill many countries with extreme uneasiness. I cannot concede," he said, "that rearming Japan can be in American interest. We cannot prevent them, but it cannot be our objective and it should not be encouraged beyond the level that now exists." Encouraged or not, however, rearmament costs a lot of money. As we shall see, Japan has more urgent problems to deal with first, before there is anything more than some wistful military window-shopping in prospect.

How did the Japanese people take to Ron? When Jimmy Carter was here in 1979, he tried to meet some of them, answering questions at a "town meeting" and dropping into a neighborhood restaurant for an unscheduled Japanese meal, during which he exchanged toasts with some uncleared and unrehearsed customers. Ron, with his grander manner, confined his meetings to the emperor, the Diet, and, of course, business talks and lunch with his friend Yasu. Mrs. Carter and Amy took a trip in the bullet train to Kyoto; the Reagans did their sightseeing by helicopter. Ron's speechwriters seem to have read more books than Jimmy's, and his address to the Diet was larded with quotes from the nineteenth-century educator Yukichi Fukuzawa and the haiku poet Basho (1644-1694). Some of Jimmy's, in contrast, could have been written by Jimmy.

But Japanese are accustomed by now to the quadrennial waltz of the Presidents, and are not unaware of their country's total military and economic dependence on the United States. The truth is, to be blunt, that Japan and Korea, the other stop on the President's Far Eastern itinerary, are clients of the United States, as the term was used by the Romans. Faithful clients of Rome were awarded the title *Amicus populi Romani*, "friend of the Roman people"—a free translation, perhaps, of "Hi, Ron" and "Hi, Yasu." Roman emperors, however, seldom appeared in public without the laurel wreath of victory on their brows, prisoners in chains scourged before them, and lictors bearing the ax and rods—none-too-subtle reminders of their power, with which it is tempting to compare the press photographs of manacled Grenadian bad guys, widely printed in Japan, and Ron's ever-present Man with the Key. In declining to rub shoulders with the common herd, Ron was, for realistic Japanese, reflecting no more than patent reality.

Are Yasu and Ron, then, real down-home friends, or just friends of state? Friends (and clients, for that matter) stay that way by doing things for each other, as Dr. Johnson indicates in his sour fashion. What, especially, is Yasu to Ron, or Ron to Yasu? "Sometimes I wonder," Ron mused in his Diet speech, "if we shouldn't further our friendship by my sending our Congress here, and you coming over and occupying our Capitol Building for a while."

Let's do it, at least the eastbound leg, and see how the Japanese political scene looks at the moment from the inside. The key figure is not, of course, Prime Minister Nakasone, but former Prime Minister Kauei Tanaka. This pair, in political power terms, approximate the rat-elephant relationship. Tanaka now has 119 followers in his bloated parliamentary faction, with more joining all the time; Yasu has only 58. But, four weeks ago, boss Tanaka was convicted of taking a $2 million bribe from Lockheed, the elephantine aircraft corporation, and sentenced to four years' hard. The boss has appealed and is out on bail, but he is far from being out of Japanese politics.

Nakasone stalled for a couple of weeks, apparently hoping that the firestorm touched off by Tanaka's conviction would burn out. Meanwhile, Tanaka insisted that he was innocent, thus slighting the emperor's judges, and claimed that he was responsible for Japan's prosperity, since he had single-handedly sustained "stable conservative government"—which may be true—as the boss has dominated Japanese politics for the past fifteen years, and is, come to think of it, a good friend of Dick Nixon's.

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Finally, on October 28, Nakasone and Tanaka met at a posh Tokyo hotel for a private summit meeting. Nakasone, we know, took flowers and asked after the boss's blood pressure. What else transpired?

According to Nakasone, who reported two days later to the executive of his party, "I told Mr. Tanaka how sorry I was to see him bearing such great distress, and to have to touch on a delicate matter at such a moment." At this point Nakasone reportedly burst into tears and, raising a handkerchief to his eyes, was heard to choke out, "It was so sad. I felt so sorry for his family. He is my friend." Nakasone did not, however, actually say to Tanaka that he should resign for the good of the party, and the boss in fact shows no signs of doing so. The justice minister, Akira Hatano (believed to be a closet Tanaka supporter), has not helped matters by saying, in a magazine interview, that everyone is making too much fuss about Tanaka's prison sentence, adding "to look for honesty or integrity in a politician is like trying to buy fish at a grocery store."

This leaves Nakasone, by the rules of Japanese political life, no option but to call a general election. The ruling party is dreading an election as much as the voters are looking forward to the free drinks which flow on such occasions, because much of its strength is among farmers, hard to get to the polls in the dead of winter, and because the Tanaka verdict is much too close for comfort. Nakasone is playing tease about the date, but he cannot delay much beyond the weekend of December 18. The outlook, then, was grim for the Liberal Democrats, and especially so for their titular leader, Yasu. Just at this moment, when a feller needs a friend, enter Ron.

NOW, YASU, given his precarious position, hasn't actually done much for Ron. But he has said the right things, especially about the Russians, and in high politics talk can often be an acceptable substitute for action. Ron, for his part, came through splendidly for Yasu, particularly at the celebrated lunch at the Nakasone weekender. It was served on a low table, and the guests sat, Japanese-style, on the floor. Yasu performed the tea ceremony, a leisurely affair, and Ron manfully tackled his first plate of Japanese raw fish, his long legs tucked awkwardly under him in the tortured pose known to all visitors to Japan. With no interpreter present, there was nothing to disturb the homey ambiance but a procession of photographers, tiptoeing through in their socks to record the occasion for every newspaper, magazine, picture agency, and—who knows?—election poster in Japan.

As well as warming Japanese hearts, the scene may well save the day for Ron's friend. The Liberal Democrats are considered certain to lose seats in the forthcoming elections, in view of the unpropitious circumstances in which they have been forced to call them. In the normal course of events, a Japanese prime minister who loses seats loses his job. But trade friction with the United States, Japan's biggest market, looks certain to continue through 1984 and will probably get worse. Now, which Japanese politician has the inside track with the most important American, who might well be President for another four years? Who is his logical Japanese partner?

Well, of course, Yasu knows English, and he has this special thing going with Ron. Almost all Japanese are well disposed toward the United States, but there is something clearly special, and warm, about these particular pals. Harry Truman put it well, at the funeral of Boss Pendergast of Kansas City: "He was my friend, and I was his."

Dr. Johnson?

MURRAY SAYLE

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A cautionary tale.

TURKEY TALKS BACK

THE TURKISH election result is a cautionary tale for generals who think they can manipulate electoral politics. The Turkish generals planned to make their former colleague, retired general Turgut Sunalp, prime minister straight away. They thought they had taken every necessary precaution to ensure that result. Contradicting the constitution which they themselves introduced last year, they carefully vetoed every party and candidate, including other retired generals, that seemed at all likely to take votes away from Sunalp. They illegally interned, without charges, active former politicians for 121 days during the crucial period when new parties were being formed. They subjected the press to strict censorship.

All in vain. Sunalp was simply not up to the job. He did not actually burst into tears in public, but he proved a hopelessly unimpressive campaigner—appearing, as one seasoned politician remarked, "practically illiterate in politics and economics." A whispering campaign soon made it widely known that he was seldom sober. Initially very military and authoritarian in his manner, he tried too late to loosen up—making tasteless jokes, for instance, about his wife's figure when the couple went to cast their votes. A last-minute effort by President Kenan Evren to rally support for him only had the effect of associating the regime more directly with his debacle. His party came in third with only 24 percent of the popular vote, and—thanks to an electoral law designed to favor the leading party—only 18 percent of the seats in the new assembly.

The election was the first since September 1980, when General Evren and his colleagues took power in a military coup, ending months of political paralysis and anarchy in which terrorists of the left and right were claiming dozens of lives a day. After three years of military rule, the gener-

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als felt secure enough to civilianize their regime, applying a constitution that was ratified by the people in a carefully organized plebiscite last year. This time voting was compulsory on pain of a fine equivalent to $10 (a week's wages for many poorer Turks). Surprisingly, less than 4 percent of the voters spoiled their ballots. Partly as a result of Evren's ill-judged election-eve attack on Turgut Özal, the protest vote went to Özal, whose Motherland Party took 45 percent of the popular vote and an overall majority of the seats.

In second place, well ahead of Sunalp, came the Popular Party, designed to serve as the "loyal opposition," and led by Necdet Calp, a civil servant of mildly social democratic views who until April was undersecretary to the prime minister in the military government.

SUNALP WILL THUS not even be the leader of the opposition in a parliament designed to give him a working majority. Instead the first prime minister under the new constitution will be Özal, the man the generals would have preferred not to have in the parliament at all. When Özal formed his party in May there was talk in military circles of bringing a case against him for his role in the banking collapse of 1982, which had led to his resignation as deputy prime minister. This would have prevented him from contesting the election.

If the generals thought better of this idea, it may have been partly due to foreign pressure. Özal is well known in Western government and financial circles for his role in negotiating the successive reschedulings of Turkey's enormous foreign debt, first as deputy to Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel in 1979-80, and, after the coup, as deputy prime minister in the military regime. His monetarist, free-market views are welcomed in the International Monetary Fund as well as Western commercial banks, and the present American, West German, and British governments. He is Turkey's "Chicago boy," who fearlessly brought down the inflation rate from 107 to 25 percent by withholding state support from industrialist and consumer alike, allowing the exchange rate to fall and domestic interest rates to shoot up while wages lagged behind and uncompetitive firms went bankrupt.

To have prevented Özal from standing would therefore have made a bad impression on those Western circles on which the Turkish regime most relies. Also, since the generals themselves had promoted him after coming to power, it would have been difficult for them to brand him as a survivor of the corrupt old political order. They probably thought his performance in government had made him too unpopular to pose any serious threat.

But though Özal made his reputation as a technocrat, he does in fact have a political past, and one not all to the generals' taste. In the last pre-coup election, in 1977, he ran in Ismir as a candidate of the National Salvation Party, of which his brother Korkut was deputy leader. Luckily for him he was not elected. If he had been he would not have been eligible to run in 1983, and indeed would probably be facing a jail sentence, as his brother is, for attempting to subvert the secular character of the state. For the N.S.P. was a thinly disguised Islamic revivalist party, of a sort which the generals, imbued with the secular legacy of the Turkish republic's founder, Kemal Atatürk, are determined not to tolerate.

Özal is a devout Muslim, which though not a crime is the exception rather than the rule among Turkey's urban educated elite. He is only a first-generation member of that elite, having grown up in the small southeastern town of Malatya where his father used to be a religious school teacher. He will apparently be the first prime minister of the Turkish republic ever to have made the pilgrimage to Mecca, and the first to go regularly to the mosque on Fridays. He chose to run this time and was triumphantly elected, in the most outwardly and traditionally religious district of Istanbul.

Just how much one should read into this politically is debatable. Özal himself shrugs off his 1977 N.S.P. candidacy as a "sentimental" concession to his brother. Refusing to be drafted in 1973, he had promised to consider the matter next time around, and the party had held him to his promise. But Özal is a more serious man, and standing for parliament a more serious matter, than this discussion would imply. "This guy is a lot less pro-Western than he looks," I heard one Turk comment last week. The speaker went on to compare him to Sheik Ahmed Yamani, the Saudi oil minister—a man familiar with the corridors of Western power and finance, yet remaining at heart a conservative Muslim whose ultimate loyalty is never in doubt.

Özal's Western connections may prove essential now that he faces the task of explaining to Turkey's allies the unilateral declaration of independence by the Turkish Cypriots. Required to support the Turkish Cypriots for domestic political reasons, Özal will have to cope with an angry reaction from Greece's friends in the West, particularly in the U.S. Congress.

The N.S.P. was hostile to Turkey's E.E.C. and NATO ties, seeking to replace them with links to the Islamic world. Özal at present is emphasizing NATO—for which there are good economic arguments anyway—while soft-pedaling the E.E.C. Turkey does not aim to become a full member "at any cost," he told me recently, adding that he was not committed even to applying for full membership in the near future. This is a marked retreat from recent Turkish policy on the issue, which has favored integration of the Turkish economy as quickly as possible with that of the E.E.C.—a prospect that appalls most E.E.C. officials, who doubt the Community can accommodate Spain and Portugal. Özal's more cautious stance could be only tactical, but it is also possible that it reflects his more profound second thoughts about the European identity claimed for Turkey by Atatürk.

Committed as Ozal is to working with Evren and the generals, he has no choice but to reaffirm Turkey's loyalty to NATO. Similarly, he will have to move very cautiously in any effort to improve respect for human rights or to extend freedom of speech and association. Before handing over power, the generals have taken care to prolong martial law

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for another four months and to promulgate a highly restrictive press law.

On November 13, after a military court trial in Istanbul lasting nearly a year and half, twenty-three leading members of the "Turkish Peace Association"—including an elderly and ailing former ambassador, the president of the Istanbul Bar Association, the president of the Chamber of Physicians, two well-known journalists, and two former Social Democrat members of parliament—received long prison sentences (all but five were sentenced to eight years). Their crime was "founding a clandestine organization to wage class struggle" and "spreading communist propaganda." No evidence had been produced that any of the accused had used or advocated violence or the overthrow of the state or anything worse than détente between East and West.

Turkey may be beginning its return to democracy, but it clearly has a long way to go.

EDWARD MORTIMER

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Docudrama of the undocudramable.

BIG BANG, LITTLE BOX

THE HALLMARK of television news is its heightened immediacy—those minicam reports live from the scene before the bodies are quite lukewarm, the world leaders videoconferencing on that afternoon's crisis. Not so TV's topical dramatic programs. They are notable for their *lack* of immediacy, their poor reflexes, their torpor in responding to shifts in mores and public concerns. (Not until years after cocaine became a staple of young, urban, upwardly mobile culture did we finally get Dennis Weaver in *Cocaine: One Man's Seduction* blurring across our screens in pursuit of snowy surcease from the pressures of selling suburban real estate.) You might even say that, once television decides to tackle an issue dramatically, it reliably signals that no one is really interested anymore.

All of which is bad news for the opponents of nuclear weapons, who now find ABC carrying the torch for them in *The Day After*, a two-and-a-half-hour docudrama of the undocudramable set in Kansas City and its silo-speckled purlieus, scheduled for broadcast November 20. ABC has had trouble persuading sponsors that thermonuclear hell sells soap. Both the network and the affiliates have had difficulty selling the commercial spots. But the network seems to think that the financial bath is worth taking in order to prove that network television, at least at ABC, is everything everyone insists it isn't. Take that, Paddy Chayevsky! The advance screenings and publicity have been thick with smugness. "We would've put it on the air with no ads," Tom Mackin, ABC Director of Program Information, told me. Brandon Stoddard, of ABC Motion Pictures, says, "It's the most important film I've been associated with, and commercial success has never been ABC's prime consideration with the project."

THIS IS a little disingenuous. *The Day After*, with or without ads, is a cinch for a high audience share. It will be lumped in with the rest of the network's ratings in Nielsen's and Arbitron's November "sweeps," and those sweeps determine the local affiliates' rate structures for the next three months. Nevertheless, though its sense of vocation is apparently genuine, on this one showing ABC stands to lose money. The cost of *The Day After* was around $7 million, three times the usual TV-movie pricetag. The director, Nicholas Meyer (*Star Trek II*), is highly regarded, and the cast is as tony as prime time ever sees: Jason Robards, JoBeth Williams (*The Big Chill*), John Cullum (*Shenandoah*), Steve Guttenberg (*Diner*), and John Lithgow (*The World According to Garp*), among others. The program will be followed by a forty-five-minute "Viewpoint" segment in which pundits will bat things around. Half a million copies of a viewer's guide have been distributed through schools, colleges, and local affiliates. The pamphlet comes complete with a quotation from Camus, a reading list of twenty-five books, and mostly, a set of "After Viewing Exercises," such as:

> 18. The survivors witness death on a massive scale. What has most influenced your attitudes toward death? (a) family and friends, (b) introspection and meditation, (c) religious values, (d) books, television, or film, (e) other.

No, it would be a mistake to think ABC is doing this just to get a leg up on NBC's *Kennedy*; it's more like noblesse oblige. Imagine next year's Emmy ceremony, when everyone will clap ferociously and feel superior to Hollywood's own prodigal son, Ronald Reagan—a ritual of collective self-approval along the lines of last year's *Gandhi*-dominated Oscars, with Hollywood in its favorite role: the whore with a heart of gold.

The predictable irony, of course, is that with the exception of its juiced-up special effects *The Day After* is a conventional TV melodrama. It's not different from other TV movies, only greater: *Brian's Song* writ large. The movie opens with a traveloguish montage of aerial shots—corn, wheat, and other bucolic commodities, accompanied by the all-American strains of Virgil Thompson's *The River*. Then we're introduced to the stock characters, the good people who will suffer nobly and die tragically at the end: Dr. Oakes, gruffly genial heart surgeon; Jim Dahlberg, noble leathery-faced farmer; William McCoy, black airman. The strategy of the first hour is to contrapuntally blend the quotidian and the catastrophic. While the characters go about their jobs, watch their sons play football, register for classes at the University of Kansas, or prepare for a wedding, bits and pieces of headlines, news broad-

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casts, and special reports tell of an accelerating East-West confrontation. It all seems to start with a rebellion among certain divisions of the East German Army. The Soviets roll in to quell the revolt, then blockade West Berlin. We protest the blockade as an act of war. The Soviets invade West Germany. We airburst three tactical warheads over their troops; they nuke NATO headquarters. They nuke a ship, we nuke a ship.

The escalation ladder is meticulously lifted from the think-tank fantasy culture of, say, Herman Kahn, and is a good example of *The Day After*'s compulsive attention to "getting it right." The holocaust itself conforms to this mood, punctiliously following the various stages of the explosion—flash, electromagnetic pulse, blast, fireball—before Meyer finally lets loose in an orgiastic montage of the Big One: red-tinted stock footage from nuclear tests spliced with quick images of people on fire and buildings collapsing, a sort of pastiche of *The Atomic Café* and *The Towering Inferno*, while two great red mushroom clouds rise over Kansas City.

THERE'S LITTLE here in the way of drama—for the first half, you wait for the bomb to drop, and once it does, you wait to see how ghoulish the makeup artists will be. Structurally, the second hour is as conventional as the first, settling on the time-polished stones of the hospital story. Dr. Oakes trudges through the rubble back to the hospital where, despite his radiation burns, hemorrhaging, and nuke-pattern baldness (only when the doctor deteriorates does Robards really start to enjoy the role), he works seventy-two hours in surgery. It's *M*A*S*H* without the quips. At the end, a disclaimer admits that the depiction of the disaster is not as severe as it really would be in the event of all-out war—that they have, in effect, pulled their punches. Still, you can hardly fault *The Day After* for not being bleak enough. After the memory of the melodrama has faded, you're left with a series of stunning images: a crane shot of the endless rubble; a traveling shot of charred automobile wreckage dusted with fallout; an aerial shot of body bags being piled up beside a mass grave, all shot in the bright, washed-out pallor of the irradiated world. The film concludes with the hopeless hope of a Beckett-like tableau—Robards, the wisps of his remaining hair a halo around his head, clutches at a squatter in an unnatural embrace as the camera zooms skyward to dwarf them amidst the surrounding chaos.

Those images probably had to be fought for tooth and claw; what comes more naturally to *The Day After* is the way it fits the Procrustean bed of television's own imperatives. Those imperatives are frankly sentimental—how bad things happen to good people. As Jonathan Schell concluded, it's not our own deaths but the metaphorical "murder of the unborn" that distinguishes nuclear warfare from the other forms of mass death. *The Day After* slurs that distinction by reducing the nuclear issue to the dramas of little people caught up in forces they can't control.

It's hard to know what ABC hopes to accomplish with all this hacking at our heartstrings. *The Day After* ends with this credo: "It is hoped that the images of this film will inspire the nations of this earth, their peoples and leaders, to find the means to avert the fateful day." Aside from the fact that certain peoples of this earth—most notably the Russians and those rebellious East Germans who started it all—won't ever get to see any of this bourgeois propaganda, it's hard to credit the network's conviction that *The Day After* will contribute to the "public debate" in any meaningful way. One network spokesman told me quite insistently that this was an *apolitical* film, and that's precisely what's wrong with it. With the possible exception of Edward Teller at his most effervescent, most seem to agree that nuclear war would be an unparalleled horror—the question is, what to do? You can imagine President Reagan coming away from watching *The Day After* with renewed vigor—if they had only had the MX!—just as easily as you can imagine Helen Caldicott being reconfirmed in her disarmament zeal.

The creators seem to think that political objectives can be achieved by apolitical means, that if we can only get everyone emotionally stirred up, the whole problem will somehow melt away amidst the frenzy. This may simply be naiveté, or it may be something worse—a species of political decadence. *The Day After* recalls one of the worst tendencies of the 1960s, the tendency to reduce everything—politics, drugs, rock 'n' roll, divorce—to equivalent occasions for phatic community, starter-cultures for a glutinous mass of good feelings. In this context, politics is pursued, not for itself, but for the community of agreement it can create, the marvelous sense that those of us within the community are better people than those outside. Questions such as whether or not to deploy Pershing missiles would only disturb this vague and buoyant conviviality; since it's consensus that matters, not instrumentally but for itself, why distress us with questions of mere practical significance?

The Day After stands as another example of TV's ability to corrupt pretty much anything. I suppose there is something genuinely courageous about it—after all, the most political show of the new season is "Mr. Smith," in which a talking orangutan with an I.Q. of 256 works as a consultant for the government. But there's something amiss when people in the industry admit that "controversial," which has been promiscuously appended to the show, is simply a euphemism for unpleasant, a "downer." *The Day After* indicates that the blank horror we first felt about atomic weapons, which led to its expression in absurdist comedy (*Dr. Strangelove*), science fiction (*Them!*), or even film noir (*Kiss Me Deadly*), has now been processed to the point where we're comfortable seeing it translated to television in a standard way. If you like the pilot, wait'll you see the series.

PAUL ATTANASIO

Paul Attanasio is a writer and critic living in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

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The fight for the Republican succession has begun.

LET LEHRMAN BE REAGAN

BY SIDNEY BLUMENTHAL

ON NOVEMBER 1, Ronald Reagan's cabinet gathered in the White House to discuss the impending American victory in Grenada. According to a senior Presidential aide, one cabinet secretary called the short war a "terrific plus" for the Administration in public opinion. But he wondered whether the positive mood could be preserved. "How do we sustain this?" he asked.

Reagan proceeded to tell his cabinet officers the story of Lewis Lehrman and Citizens for America. Lehrman ran for governor of New York in 1982 and narrowly lost. Now he is heading a new conservative group, which is organizing chapters in every Congressional district in the land, bringing the message of the free market and the free world to the grass roots.

Citizens for America, however, serves more than the conservative cause. The organization is fused with its chief's ambition. Its success is his success, as an entrepreneur such as Lehrman knows. His role with C.F.A. may ultimately position him to campaign for President—a campaign that might pit him against his friend and ideological ally, Representative Jack Kemp. Thus, even as Reagan contemplates running for a second term, the politics of succession is beginning to preoccupy younger men. And a few older ones, too: the men who financed the rise of Ronald Reagan have begun planning for the post-Reagan era. They have been instrumental in enhancing Lehrman's current prominence as a conservative leader and plausible Reagan heir.

Back in 1964, after Reagan's electrifying television speech on behalf of Barry Goldwater's Presidential candidacy, a small band of California entrepreneurs decided the former actor was promising political material. They privately encouraged his entry into public life, hiring his political consultants and bankrolling his 1966 gubernatorial campaign. Justin Dart, the drugstore tycoon; Holmes Tuttle, the automobile dealer; Earle Jorgensen, the steel distributor; and the others in their tight-knit circle became the politician's Kitchen Cabinet, always available for discreet advice and funds.

Their fondest dream was realized when Reagan was elected President. But they know they can't depend forever on his mortal charisma. Like Reagan they're elderly, and they want to leave an enduring legacy. They have something more in mind than a single conservative Presidency. They intend nothing less than the permanent transformation of American politics. "Ronald Reagan is a very effective individual putting across the program," says Jack Hume, a charter member of the Kitchen Cabinet and retired food processing mogul. "We hope there will be other individuals to follow him."

Ronald Reagan, the "very effective individual" in the White House, doesn't exist in isolation; he wasn't spontaneously generated like Jimmy Carter. Reagan is the leader and the product of a movement. A wide array of institutions, ranging from think tanks to political action committees, helped make him effective in his 1980 campaign and afterward. Reagan is less a Republican than a conservative. Once a very active liberal Democrat, his switch to the other side didn't mark his transformation into a conventional partisan. He was always committed to an ideological politics. His triumph as a Republican came at the expense of traditional Republicans. The Grand Old Party, which was contemptuous of all social movements, dedicated to the preservation of the status quo, and deeply influenced by its Massachusetts and New York contingents, has been eclipsed. The Republican National Committee has been turned into a consulting firm, an agency of technocrats (a process begun under Richard Nixon's regime), while the conservatives have taken control of the political agenda and policymaking. The party apparatus doesn't create the program; it's programmed. For the conservatives, remaking the party is a precondition to remaking America.

Jack Hume had the notion that another conservative piece could be put on the board. "I've felt for a long time," he says, "that a larger number of conservatives who are opinion leaders in each Congressional district would like to function as a group." He broached the idea to his close friends. Holmes Tuttle and Earle Jorgensen gave generously. So did others who were approached, including Fred Hartley, the chairman of Union Oil, and Robert Anderson, chairman of Atlantic Richfield. "Naturally," says Hume, "you turn to the people you know." In March he traveled to Washington to meet with some old friends from California to see if they would lend their moral support. Ronald Reagan and Edwin Meese were both enthusiastic and urged him to continue his efforts.

The new organization was named Citizens for America, endowed with an initial annual budget of $1.5 million, and invested with the task of perpetuating conservative ideology beyond Reagan. Hume's idea was that each chapter would be headed by an outstanding local entrepreneur,

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around whom twenty to thirty other small businessmen would congregate. In *Babbitt*, Sinclair Lewis wrote about the quintessential go-getter of the 1920s, who was instinctively loyal to objects of "eternal importance, like baseball or the Republican Party." Today, C.F.A. leaders have in mind an organization that would turn George Babbitt into a Main Street militant, a self-conscious ideologue. "This," says Jack Hume, "is *not* a Republican group, but an attempt to bring together conservatives. We're working for principles." Two, three, many Kitchen Cabinets.

Hume had no desire to lead the group himself. He wanted someone younger to assume responsibility. Choosing the chairman of C.F.A. was a way of advancing onto the national stage another potentially "very effective individual." Hume knew what the résumé of his ideal chairman should include. "I wanted to get a successful businessman," he says, "who was reasonably young, retired from active business, a conservative with proven executive ability." In discussions among conservative leaders he consulted, one name kept surfacing: Lewis E. Lehrman. "I'd never met him before," says Hume.

LEHRMAN, 45 years old, neatly fit Hume's bill of particulars. Lehrman made his fortune building the Rite-Aid drugstore empire, and he has the will to power of one who attributes his dizzying success entirely to personal drive. Unlike a corporate manager, he's the ruler of a realm he's created, which encourages his instinctive independence and impatience. He's willing to take risks, including political risks. He spent more than $7 million of his own capital in his campaign for governor of New York. And he challenged not only the Democrats but also the Republican Party professionals. He hadn't hesitated to criticize President Reagan's slogan—"Stay the Course"—for its implicit defensiveness. Lehrman believed the only way to hold ground was to stay on the offensive. The closeness of his race against Mario Cuomo earned him widespread admiration among conservatives.

Hume met Lehrman in May. The younger man's personal manner is a mixture of flamboyance and polish. Lehrman's arresting white wavy hair, flared jawline, and pinched nose somehow emphasize the intensity of his rhetoric. His meticulously tailored suits and red suspenders convey a calculated self-assurance. He may be a self-made man, but not of the old rough-and-ready school. Lehrman is a Yale graduate. Moreover, he is Jewish, a circumstance his new patrons may welcome as proof the right has abandoned old prejudices, much as some liberals welcomed John Kennedy's Catholicism. And he is more than merely articulate; he has a genuine interest in ideas. Since 1972 he has funded a small, politically ecumenical Manhattan think tank, the Lehrman Institute, which has invited hundreds of distinguished scholars and journalists to its colloquia.

Entrepreneur, intellectual, citizen-politician—Lehrman is the kind of son a Kitchen Cabinet member might like to have: just like the old man, only better. Hume decided Lehrman was the man for the movement. Once again, the Kitchen Cabinet anointed a promising leader of the future, who, like Reagan in 1964, had never held public office.

Shortly afterward, Lehrman received a telephone call from Ronald Reagan. A laying-on-of-hands ceremony would take place in June at the White House. "The President and I had a long talk," says Lehrman. "The conclusions of our discussion were very simple. We agreed we needed a national civil league, an activist enterprise, people who agreed on first principles, that would focus on economic and national security policies. Our first purpose is to induce a mutation in the climate of opinion in America among opinion leaders. We would join the intellectual debate in every town, village, and city through our Congressional district committees. We would also lobby Congress. Finally, we concluded that this would be the work of a lifetime. Just as the social democratic ideas took two generations to complete, so our work requires the remainder of the working lifetimes of the people involved."

Lehrman views Reagan's presence in the Oval Office as just the beginning of the conservative movement, not as its culmination. "The big issue," he told me recently, "is whether we're at the Menshevik or the Bolshevik phase, whether it's 1905 or 1917. Maybe I should talk about this in terms of the American Revolution. I think we're at the Committee of Correspondence stage of the revolution, the early stage. Reagan has made all of this possible through his charm and his vision. But it's incomplete." The triumph is partial until the dominant institutions of the "liberal establishment" are vanquished. "The conservative movement is less strong than the liberal establishment," Lehrman says. "We don't control the high places—the great foundations, the organs of communication, the elite universities, the cosmopolitan newspapers. It makes the challenge all the more desirable and the taste of victory all the more exciting. The taste is in my mouth a little bit."

IMMEDIATELY AFTER leaving his meeting with Reagan, Lehrman set out on his mission to construct a new political organization from top to bottom. In Washington, a small office was established and a political consulting firm was hired—the company of Bond and Laxalt, whose principals are Richard Bond, former political director of the Republican National Committee; and Michele Laxalt, whose father, Senator Paul Laxalt, is one of the President's closest friends and the general chairman of the R.N.C. "Lew's an outsider. He's not known here," says Michele Laxalt. "I'm networking him, scheduling him to meet with as many members of Congress as possible, starting with Republicans and conservative Democrats. I understand what turf means when it comes to Congressmen in terms of their districts. Lew will explain that he's going into their districts." That way they won't feel their prerogatives impinged upon. They are also courted by being called on for advice in selecting the chief of the C.F.A. chapter in their district.

These chapters, in fact, are coordinated by eight regional directors. Since August, 108 committees have been established, with 25 in the Northeast, 14 in the Midwest,

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and 42 in the West. Carol Hallet, the former Republican leader in the California Assembly and unsuccessful candidate for lieutenant governor in 1982, is the director there. She was personally recruited by Jack Hume. Before she accepted the job offer, she consulted the President's men, all well known to her through the California connection. Edwin Meese, she says, told her that "It was extremely important. He felt it was something never done before." She also talked with political operative Lyn Nofziger and Holmes Tuttle, who were solidly behind the new effort. Another influential Californian, William Clark, then the national security adviser, was all for it, too. On August 3 she attended an all-day reception for C.F.A.'s leadership at the White House. The big event concluded with Rose Garden festivities highlighted by an impromptu Reagan speech. The President said that he was tired of watching the distortions of his program on the television nightly news. It was time for conservative activists to bring the news directly to the people through local media. Then Reagan posed for pictures.

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

The district chairmen are the heart of the organization. They and their followers are the citizens of Citizens of America. David Carmen, the group's director of policy and communication, says, "We're looking for the guy who owns five supermarkets, or the local newspaper owner, or the automobile dealer—someone who will get his calls returned when he calls the Congressman or television station." The Washington office, headed by Carmen, sends out periodic mailings to the chairmen on various issues. On Central America, for example, they were sent *The Reality Report*, a collection of facts ("El Salvador is closer to Texas than Texas is to Massachusetts") organized as debating points; a copy of a speech by President Reagan; a column by George Will; more arguments as facts from the *White House Digest* ("Among Central Americans, there is little doubt about the Sandinistas' willingness to export the Revolution"); and a background paper published by the the Heritage Foundation (on whose board Lehrman, incidentally, sits). The chairmen then use this information as weapons to counter what Carol Hallet calls the "biased influence of the liberal Eastern media establishment." They rouse their members to write letters to the editor and Op-Ed pieces, appear on local radio and television talk shows, answer station editorials, and speak in public forums. "The local media has been extremely receptive to us," says Carmen. "The involvement of local people gives them the angle." And the pressure.

When an event suddenly occurs that the national office feels demands an instant response, it issues a Call for Action. "We want people to get immediately into the press and call Congressmen," says Carmen. "Everyone pulls out all the stops." The first call went out as the Marines stormed ashore on Grenada. Carmen describes it as C.F.A.'s "baptismal fire—the perfect opportunity." As soon as news broke about the Grenada crisis, his telephone started "ringing off the hook." The calls were from local chairmen who were irate that the operation was being labeled an "invasion" rather than a "rescue." Within forty-eight hours, the chapters received a Call for Action briefing kit. The cover memorandum to the chairmen about Grenada presented the conflict as one involving Ronald Reagan and the "national media," which has "taken part in a blatant politicizing of this action. Refusing to report the position of both the government and most Americans, the networks and wire services have instead termed the action 'an invasion'—words that were first applied to the operation by Fidel Castro." "It's a test," says Carmen, "for our people to see if they can affect the coverage."

Their attempt to introduce their propaganda into the stream of breaking news is intended to alter the news

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itself. After all, the distinction between an "invasion" and a "rescue" is not purely semantic. Each word, according to the C.F.A. activists, represents a world view and a set of institutions: liberalism versus conservatism, the media establishment versus the movement. In their view, the battle over which word is employed is finally one over which political force will prevail.

On October 31, Ronald Reagan telephoned Lewis Lehrman. The President had received C.F.A.'s Call for Action, and he offered effusive praise. The next day, at the cabinet meeting, he told the assembled officials that C.F.A. was gallantly fighting the battle for public opinion. And, on November 3, at his press conference announcing that the military mission in Grenada was accomplished, the President insisted that the operation should be called a "rescue," challenging the credibility of the press for using the word "invasion," although he had at first applied the word himself. After C.F.A. politicized the terms, Reagan sought ideological advantage by adopting the conservative definition.

For C.F.A., Grenada was a victorious skirmish in a long campaign against the "liberal establishment." The group's attempted use of the local press against the national press is unquestionably the beginning of a sustained assault on other fronts.

ALTHOUGH the group is still in its formative stage, its membership minuscule, and its name mostly unknown, its leaders' expectations are great. They are positive that 435 chapters will be in place and the membership will number at least eight thousand by January 1985. More important, the group's strategic purpose will begin to be realized. "We will become *the* ideological force in the communities, stronger than the parties, either one of them, because we have a single mindset on first principles," says Carmen. He calls this, "our ideological sugarplum dream." The Republican Party, meanwhile, will follow in the wake of the conservatives. "The winning ideas of the 1980s and 1990s," says Lewis Lehrman, "will be ideas with an independent development imported into the Republican Party." The Party, in other words, is a part of the movement, not the other way around.

The ideological politics C.F.A. practices implies charismatic leadership, an individual who can inspire the commitment of masses. "Can you think of any movement of ideas in Western history over the last two centuries which has become the governing party in the absence of a charismatic leader?" asks Lewis Lehrman. By gaining acceptance into Reagan's inner circle and command of C.F.A., he is laying the groundwork for himself to become the charismatic leader he refers to: let Lehrman be Reagan.

In his new book, *In the Shadow of FDR*, William E. Leuchtenburg describes how Presidents from Truman to Reagan have measured themselves against Roosevelt, the charismatic liberal whose lasting legacy was the institutions forged during the New Deal. For the rising generation of conservative politicians, Reagan casts a Rooseveltian shadow. But Reagan's charisma, unlike F.D.R.'s, cannot be bequeathed to government, because government is the dragon he set out to slay. He must distribute his grace to other institutions, those of the conservative movement. So he smiles upon Citizens for America, which pledges to keep the ideology pure. Reagan will live on through Reaganism.

The question of the successor's links to the conservative movement then becomes crucial. No one can be a fully legitimate heir without these ties. The ascension of George Bush to the Presidency would mean the conservatives' heroic age would be at a close. Bush might pay lip service to conservative ideas, but his instincts don't resemble Reagan's. (Remember "voodoo economics"?) The victory of Howard Baker would mean Thermidor, the end of the conservative revolution and the return to power of the traditional establishment.

AT THE MOMENT, there is no clear successor in the Reagan mold, but there are two obvious aspirants. One is Jack Kemp. The other is Lewis Lehrman. Both are young, ardent supply-siders, attached to the conservative movement, with political bases in New York State. They are virtual ideological twins. During Reagan's transition to the Presidency, Kemp lobbied hard for Lehrman's appointment as Secretary of the Treasury and, failing in that bid, lobbied for his choice as an undersecretary. Like the rivalry of Octavian and Mark Antony for the mantle of Caesar, the struggle between Lehrman and Kemp may simply be intensified by friendship and common political loyalties.

If Reagan decides not to run in 1984, Kemp, unlike Lehrman, is positioned to mount a strong Presidential campaign. He already has his own political action committee, with a hefty treasure chest. Over the years he has carefully nurtured a national network of followers and financial givers; they eagerly await his signal. But if Reagan does run, then in 1988 Kemp and Lehrman loom as potentially fierce competitors, fighting for the same base. The jockeying has already started.

The high priests of conservatism view this contest with bemused and critical detachment. "May the best man win," says Irving Kristol, the neoconservative who is Kemp's intellectual mentor and serves as a trustee of the Lehrman Institute. "The last time I was at Jack's, about two months ago, Lew was there. It's like watching the Jets and the Giants playing in the Super Bowl. I'm for both."

William F. Buckley Jr., editor of *National Review*, on whose board Lehrman sits, sees problems with both men. "Jack Kemp has a considerable Hamlet problem," he says. "He could have been governor of New York. Just as he dipped one toe in the water, he backed away. Some of his closest friends don't actually know if he'll ever enter the primaries and forfeit his beloved home seat. Lew, on the other hand, has to win elective office to be considered for President. This is a real problem for Lew. Wendell Willkie is the only person I can think of who contended for the Presidency without having won anything anywhere."

"The post-Reagan selection is wide open," says Jeffrey

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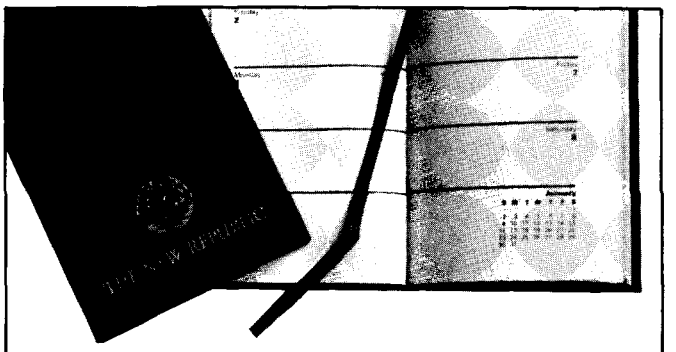
Bell, a resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, who has been closely associated with both Lehrman and Kemp. "Reagan is the universe, and people have to figure out strategies to be part of it. Now Lew has to show whether he can pull people together, put ideas into practice. Conservatives want to see what happens. Nobody has given proof of being the heir apparent. Everybody has an extended audition."

All along, Jack Kemp's strategy has been clear. He would await Reagan's retirement and then run as the true conservative against more traditional Republicans such as George Bush, Howard Baker, and Robert Dole. Lehrman's emergence on the scene complicates his plans. For, until recently, Kemp felt he owned the conservatives. Now C.F.A. will give Lehrman a network of cadres, a national fundraising capacity, and extensive publicity. Yet his lack of experience in elective office remains a glaring gap on his résumé and may impel him to run for office in 1986. If he runs for governor of New York, the obvious obstacle is the formidable incumbent, Cuomo, who has beaten him once and may harbor Presidential ambitions of his own.

THERE IS, however, another scenario which some of Jack Kemp's friends whisper about with trepidation. What if Reagan wins a second term and Lehrman is awarded a cabinet post—say, Secretary of Commerce? Cui bono? The Lehrman appointment would be engineered by the dreaded "pragmatist" James Baker, the White House chief of staff. Republican primary voters might easily feel that a cabinet secretary has experience and prestige at least equal to that of a mere Congressman, and the conservative vote might therefore be split. The beneficiary would be George Bush, whom Baker served as campaign manager in 1980. Such speculation may seem farfetched. One of Lehrman's friends calls this scenario "wild," although he observes mischievously that Baker and Lehrman did attend Yale together, and that Lehrman made a substantial contribution to Baker's losing campaign for attorney general of Texas. This sort of conjecture is an expression of early anxiety, a sign of maneuverings to come.

Lehrman is enormously confident about the future. To him, Reagan's Presidency is only the glimmering of what will follow. The movement will inexorably gather strength. "If the past is prologue, some great crisis, some great event, will make the conservative idea a reality," he says. "The Depression was the event that created the coalition in which the social democratic idea in America triumphed. It's hard to predict what the event will be. But I have little doubt that there will be *the* event. I am struck by the Lincoln experience. He was unusual for an ideologue in that he was a good inside politician. And he was relentless. He made unavoidable the irrepressible conflict. Lincoln didn't know the context in which it would occur, the timing of the event, but he knew it would happen. We change the climate of opinion and we await the event and then we win. Total victory."



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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Cold, Hot, Tepid

Beauty and baloney are mixed in *Never Cry Wolf*, but not equally: the former prevails. The story, billed as true, is about a government scientist who goes to the Arctic to study the behavior of wolves and whose own behavior is affected, beneficially, by what he observes of the animals, as well as by the grandeur of the landscape. The changes in the urban pip-squeak, humorously played by Charles Martin Smith, are affecting, but some of the surrounding reality of this true story is fabricated, and the film's basic idea—civilization corrupts—is tacky even up North where every prospect freezes and only man is vile.

Never Cry Wolf
(Buena Vista)

Carmen
(Orion)

The Osterman Weekend
(20th Century-Fox)

Carroll Ballard, the director, previously did *The Black Stallion*, another film centered on animals, which combined beauty and baloney in worse proportion. Here, with a cinematographer named Hiro Narita, Ballard has made a film that is simply wonderful to look at, so wondrous that it almost makes a specious case for its thematic nonsense.

The Arctic has been a cinematic habitat from Flaherty's *Nanook of the North* (1922) to Troell's recent *Flight of the Eagle*. Most such pictures either show how natives survive, like *Nanook*, or how visitors don't, like *Eagle*. *Never Cry Wolf* is seasonally different: it moves from frozen spring to frozen autumn, but most of it takes place in Arctic summer. Like summers in all localities that are mostly chill, this summer seems especially precious, distilled. Add the impression of interstellar space on the surface of one planet, and the result is exquisitely awesome.

But some of the nature is nonnatural. Almost all the wolves that we see are in fact dogs that were dyed and trained. I don't know how the picture could have been made otherwise, but that's not my problem: in a picture meant to have a documentary feeling that impresses us with nature's truth, it's odd to fake the document. And studio sequences intrude. For instance, there's an episode in which Smith falls through a hole in the ice, and the camera goes with him as he struggles upward through the water to find that hole or to crack open an escape hatch.

Matters like these mar a film which comes on with the clear implication that purity resides out there beyond civilization's ruses. Equally questionable is the heavy contrast between the buccaneering airplane pilot who brings Smith to the wilderness and the simple old Inuit, who is the Noble Savage yet again. And there's a young Inuit who serves as bridge: he starts Noble but ends up sullied by his weakness for false teeth and a camera. Rousseau gets taken for one more kiddie-car ride in this script, but at least the ride is through terrain that dwarfs the script eventually.

South to Spain, not as torrid here in climate as in physicality. *Carmen* is Carlos Saura's fantasia on Mérimée's novel, with generous helpings of Bizet on the soundtrack and even more music by the flamenco guitarist Paco de Lucia, all built toward the film's principal element, the dancing and choreography of the celebrated Antonio Gades. In the film Gades is creating a dance production of *Carmen*, searches for a young woman to dance the leading role opposite his Don José, finds her, falls in love with her, and begins to live the *Carmen* story with her while creating the dance version.

The girl's name is Carmen, and the film's first virtue is that it survives this neatness. The second, greater, is that it runs almost a hundred minutes, is composed largely of Spanish dancing, and is continuously gripping. For me, Spanish dancing—at any rate, the kind most commonly dubbed so, with arched backs and castanets and stamping feet—is the most quickly wearisome of all dance. Ten minutes is about all I can usually take, not just because the vocabulary of this dance is restricted but because its thematic range is narrow. Spanish dance is about sexual intercourse. All dance has some connection with sexuality, I suppose, but no other serious dancing that I know concentrates so narrowly on the arousal of sexual excitement. This is not a dull subject in life, as readers may have discovered, but in art, it has its limits. For the first time in my experience, Gades and his colleagues keep long segments of this highly repetitive dance alive and stinging.

Thus, though Saura directed, it's Gades's film in the most substantive way. He dances excellently, unfailingly electric, moving like a whip. And the dancing he evokes from others comes close to matching his own. His assistant in the film, Cristina Hoyos, is also a fine dancer, but, as he tells her, she's just not Carmen. The young woman he finds for the role is Laura del Sol, and she's an explosion of beauty and risk. To an amateur eye, del Sol's dancing seems not to have the snap and flash of Gades and Hoyos, but she's good—

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Passion. The subject is the making of a TV film in Switzerland, but that's just a pretext for Godard's continuing exploration of film.

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The Right Stuff. Right enough, anyway. Chuck Yeager and the seven Mercury astronauts in a film of aviation history that, ironically, is almost a history of aviation film.

SK

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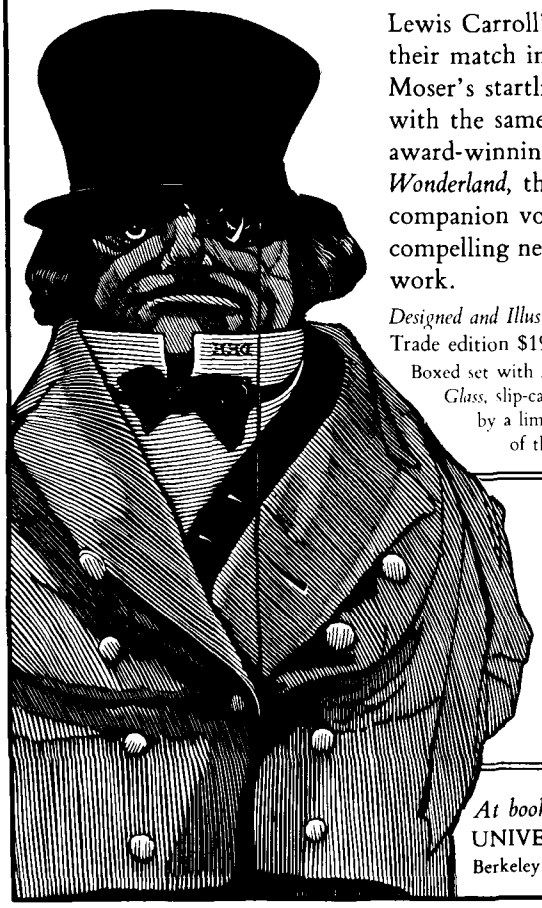
utterly believable as Gades's choice for his production and seduction.

Saura gets credit as co-choreographer with Gades. What is unquestionably to his credit is the choreography of the camera. Almost all the film takes place in Gades's huge studio, with his apartment attached, and within that locus, Saura leads the film back and forth from the *Carmen* being created to the *Carmen* being lived during that creation, with no cuteness and with just enough ambiguity to blur slightly (which is what he wishes) the line between the dance and the dancers' lives. Much of Saura's previous work has seemed sententious: here, with Gades, he has created a unique, lithe, sensual organism.

SAM PECKINPAH is back, after several years' absence, with a spy thriller called *The Osterman Weekend*, adapted from a novel by Robert Ludlum. A dreary occasion. Peckinpah is one of the few postwar American directors who developed recognizable and rewarding styles. *The Wild Bunch*, which Peckinpah made in 1969, is his style at its height and is a landmark of change in the Western; *Junior Bonner* and *The Getaway* declined from that height but were still extraordinary. Even *The Killer Elite* had some good Peckinpah flourishes. But the news got worse and worse, and now it's dismal. I've seen sillier spy thrillers than *The Osterman Weekend*, but they weren't made by Peckinpah and thus were less depressing.

His first mistake was the choice of Rutger Hauer as the hero. Hauer, a German, has been a maniacal killer in several pictures, including *Blade Runner*, and apparently Peckinpah deliberately chose an actor associated with villainy—like Ernest Borgnine in *The Wild Bunch*—to play a sympathetic figure, as an attempt at complex texture and reverse English. This attempt fizzles. Hauer is unconvincing in his profession, a big TV interviewer-investigator, and doesn't appeal. Even when he embraces his little son, he seems like a robot with an aberration. (His character's name is John Tanner. Was there no one around this film who had read *Man and Superman*? Or am I missing the point of a deliberate pilfering from Shaw?)

The story is about a reunion of college pals (it has more plot than *The Big Chill* but even less pertinence), three of whom are suspected agents for the So-



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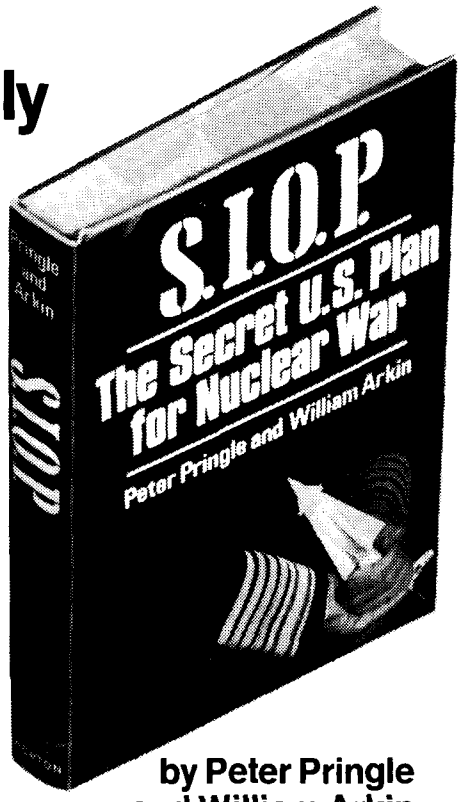

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viet Union. Sexy wives are also on hand, as are a lot of C.I.A. hugger-mugger and John Hurt as the chief operative. Hurt is an unfailingly winning actor. There's no explanation of his English accent, still his presence in the film, in this role, is Peckinpah's best stroke. Burt Lancaster strains along as the politically ambitious head of the C.I.A., with his sorry little dyed-brown hairdo perched on top of his big head like a hirsute yarmulke.

A few Peckinpah traces, the slow-motion violence and the braided editing, can be discerned in this twisty tale of conspiracies. But the most painful conspiracy disclosed by this film is that of contemporary conditions—cultural, economic, social—against the longevity of film directors' careers in America. Not that Peckinpah is a completely innocent victim. To judge by some of the latter-day choices he has made, he may be a co-conspirator.

MOHAMMED AND MODERNITY

In the Path of God: Islam and Political Power by Daniel Pipes

(Basic, 359 pp., $22.50)

Muslims are a nuisance. As a matter of fact, they always were a nuisance. In the Middle Ages, Muslim land pirates based in Provence raided far and wide in the western Alps, which must have been a kind of undefended wilderness. Later Moroccan sea pirates ventured into the Bristol Channel and as far as Newfoundland, and when they were objects of counteraggression during a truce they had the nerve to sue their attackers in a Dutch court (which is very convenient for historians, as Dutch courts keep good records). But during the odd century and a half since they obliged the U.S. Marines to intervene in the eastern Mediterranean on "the shores of Tripoli," despite a mad mullah here, a mad Mahdi there, despite the annihilation of a British and a Spanish army by Afghan and Moroccan tribesmen respectively, Muslim nuisance-power diminished markedly. It seemed a spent force. Then it dramatically reappeared in a new and unprecedentedly powerful form. OPEC and Khomeini reversed the trend. Or the shocks which they administered made visible and conspicuous a current that had been running strong for some time.

Westerners have since been trying hard to understand what hit them. Daniel Pipes's scholarly, far-ranging, and thoughtful book is a further contribution to this endeavor. Pipes has sympathy for the Muslim predicament. He invites Westerners to imagine how they would feel if

> . . . Arabs, Persians and Turks had made the breakthrough to modernity and Christendom were forced to adjust . . . if Middle Eastern states had divided Europe amongst them . . . if Iraq had conquered Rome, and . . . Paris had been subject to Saudi laws . . . if Egypt and Pakistan possessed the world's most powerful armed forces . . . if the greatest authority on Aristotle were a Yemeni and the outstanding critic of Shakespeare a Moroccan . . . if dinars, dirhams and riyals dominated the foreign-trade markets. . . .

I have little disagreement with Pipes's diagnosis of Muslim distress. The point at which I am inclined to part company with him hinges on a question he does not ask insistently enough: why do Muslims differ in their reaction, not from the West, but from the other great pre-industrial literate civilizations (including "backward" parts of Christendom itself), which, after all, have had to face the very same trauma?

The difference between Atlantic societies which led the breakthrough to scientific and industrial society, and the others which were obliged to adjust to its impact, is fairly obvious. It is the difference *within* the others that presents the real puzzle. Admittedly Muslims have not been conspicuously successful in coping with the Western challenge, though their failure ought not be exaggerated; the difference between Muslim lands, and many non-Muslim parts of Asia, and indeed various laggards within Christendom (in Southern and Eastern Europe, or in Latin America, not to mention the Horn of Africa) is not great, nor always to the disadvantage of Muslims. The really striking fact about Islam is not any special success or failure in coping with the challenge, but the truly astonishing extent to which Muslims have turned to, or maintained, their traditional religion. That is unique.

There is little to compare with it elsewhere, leaving aside special and idiosyncratic situations (such as the Polish use of the Catholic Church as a counter-state). But the political vigor of Islam is not tied to any area; it can be observed in *all* of them. Of the great pre-industrial literate religions, Islam alone has retained a powerful hold over the minds and political will of its adherents, among both the masses and the elites. Moreover, it has continued to expand. It is this which needs to be understood.

Among some unreflective Westerners, the belief is now current that this has something to do with oil (a view, I hasten to stress, not shared by Pipes). This explanation is worthless. The phenomenon to be explained predates the impact of oil wealth. The oil crisis is contemporary only with the Western awakening to the Muslim awakening. Pipes observes that "the religion of Islam does not account for the predicament of modern Muslims. . . ." Indeed, it does not. But it may account for the unique reaction of Muslims to that predicament—unique not (yet) in its technical effectiveness, but in its ideological vigor and homogeneity.

Daniel Pipes's underlying assumptions represent what I should call the conventional wisdom of the West. This is not said disparagingly. The conventional wisdom of the West is deep, and its deployment by Pipes does not preclude him from displaying originality and insight when applied to this problem. Still, that conventional wisdom may well be in error, and it is worthwhile considering some alternatives to it. It is as well to have more than one view to hand when contemplating the future. Pipes's views do not merely reflect the modal Western philosophy of history; they are also basically optimistic. I hope he is right, and I fear that he may not be. Neither Pipes nor I will know for some time (if ever) which view is correct.

Pipes sees participatory politics as

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distinctively Western: ". . . citizenship is another uniquely Western idea. . . . Islamdom knew nothing comparable." But most Muslim states (the Arabian peninsula excepted) took over the trappings of representative government as part and parcel of modernization; they fit poorly, however, with a tradition of what Pipes calls detachment from government, which he considers pervasive in the Muslim social synthesis. He might have quoted the familiar Muslim saying which declares a man blessed if he knows not the ruler and is not known to him. Contact with government is a peril to be avoided.

NOT unnaturally, Pipes seems influenced by his own previous historical work on the Mamluk period, during which government and war became the prerogative of a technically "slave" stratum. The rulers were slaves in the sense that they belonged to the state, though the state also belonged to them. The rulers' job was to watch over the peace in which wealth could be produced; the job of the ruled ones was to produce the wealth, and hand over a good part of it in payment. This was the Circle of Equity. The segregation of economic productivity from political participation which this implies is indeed alien to Western ideas of society, which in turn underlie the newly imported institutions. It remains to be said that this segregation was far more complete in theory than it was in fact, that it constitutes one aspect, not the whole, of traditional Muslim society, and that Pipes seems to be overimpressed by it.

It leads him to see a politically detached and at the same time claustrophilic civilization, which taught that any government was better than none, provided it upheld the faith and the morals which were integral parts of its ethos. It was conservative and socially unenterprising; supine twice over, for entirely secular reasons, analogous to those which can be found in Hobbes, and for religious reasons, through a kind of ideological sclerosis, a fixation on a supposedly definitive, detailed, and divinely ordained blueprint of the social order. Pipes offers a fascinating (and more or less convincing) list of reasons which make such a civilization specially ill-equipped for coping with the challenge when it came. (Compare this Muslim orientation inward with the Japanese habit of deferring to Chinese models, which presumably made it relatively easy for the Japanese to shift their reverent gaze from Cathay to the West, once Commander Perry had demonstrated its authority.)

Pipes's Western optimism comes out in the next stage of his argument. The Western syndrome of social traits, he argues, is relatively indigestible for a society nurtured so long on a different style. In the long run, however, Muslims will have no choice but to digest it:

> To escape anomy, Muslims have but one choice, for modernization requires Westernization; the fundamentalist option is illusory. . . . Islam does not offer an alternate way to modernize. . . . Secularism cannot be avoided. Modern science and technology require an absorption of the thought processes which accompany them; so too with political institutions. Because content must be emulated no less than form, the predominance of Western civilization must be acknowledged. . . . Only when Muslims accept the Western model will they be in a position . . . to develop. Secularism alone offers escape from the Muslim plight.

This is an application to Islam of the vision (and the implicit policy recommendations) which accompanied works such as W. W. Rostow's *Stages of Economic Growth*, and much of the early preoccupation with "underdevelopment" and its correction. Fear naught, it says: the rest of the world wishes to become rich and powerful, just like us. (This is true enough.) But the only way of acquiring our affluence is to take over our rationality, our secularism, our liberalism, our accountable government . . . you name it, they'll have to swallow it. Affluence is only available as part of a package deal, and the other elements in the package will render the recipients at least a little harmless, perhaps even likeable. Of course there are grave dangers along the way, but in the long run, at any rate if we can help them round the cape, all will be well.

I wish I could share such optimism, either about history or about Islam. The liberal package did indeed have intimate links with the birth of science, technology, and industrialism, and it is unlikely that we could have had the one without the other. Societies which em-

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braced liberal institutions did so for their own sakes, and perhaps the first time it could not have happened any other way. Yet there seems to me no reason to suppose that the liberal package can be guaranteed to remain a necessary precondition either for fully developed industrial societies or for imitative industrializers. World War II, people tend to forget, was a damn close thing. Had the developed part of Europe been a self-contained continent, it most certainly would have gone the other way. So the Pipesian optimism does not even convince me about home, let alone about the House of Islam. The package deal of affluence-and-liberalism has been taken apart, and societies can and do pick and choose within it. (Japan, for instance, has a brilliant economy, a pluralist politics—thanks to military defeat—but little individualism.)

As far as the Muslims are concerned, I'd offer Pipes an alternative hypothesis. He quotes Wilfred Cantwell Smith to the effect that almost every Islamic movement in the modern world was based on some variation on the double theme of "internal deterioration" and "external encroachment," and this is indeed so. But why that preoccupation with internal deterioration? The answer, it seems to me, is that it was always there, that it is endemic, structural. It was a kind of optical illusion: Islam had to be ever deteriorating to stay in the same place. Complaining about the deterioration, denouncing it, and occasionally setting up corrective movements of reform, was an old, old habit, and certainly did not start in the eighteenth century.

There are profound reasons why this should be so. The Islamic blueprint offers the vision of a community of faith without internal divisions, implementing the unique uncreated Word of God as available in writing, without clerical mediators, each man with equal access to God. In fact, however, prior to the coming of modernity, the rural world of the arid zone remained full of self-administering communities, predominantly though not exclusively defined in genealogical or pseudogenealogical terms, ratifying their cohesion by means of clan-specific forms of the sacred, and governing themselves by tribal custom rather than by script-transmitted, divinely ordained rules. In other words, some approximation to the blueprint was possible in urban settings, but was rather difficult to apply in rural and tribal ones.

Movements aiming to correct this situation were periodically set in motion, usually with urban leadership but with tribal followers. Ironically, the tribesmen themselves were not reluctant to enlist in movements aiming at mending their own manners, provided they also reaped some rewards. Paris is worth a Mass; and Fez, Sokoto, Khartoum or Mecca were well worth a bit of Koranic observance. But until the coming of modernity success was always temporary, and followed by a relapse. As Friedrich Engels noted, almost certainly cribbing from Ibn Khaldun, the revolutions were circular, and (unlike those of Christendom) led to no structural transformations. A few generations after the success of the reforming movement, the exigencies of urban and pastoral life resulted in a return to the self-same situation as the one which originally provoked the reforming zeal.

BY AND LARGE Christendom was used to self-governing towns and oppressed peasants. In Islam it tended to be the other way round. Commercial towns, practicing a scripturalist faith with marked "protestant" traits, were firmly ruled from above and, as Pipes stresses, developed a certain detachment from politics. But there was also, and this Pipes does not stress, an important segment of society, among both pastoralists and sedentary peasants, which was well habituated to self-administration, to an exceptionally high degree of political and military participation. These self-governing tribesmen were not morally paradigmatic. On the contrary, they tended to constitute a moral scandal, an offense, and they themselves concurred with this view, and from time to time participated in an inevitably ephemeral endeavor to eradicate the offence. Their liberty and self-administration were part and

OUR FATHER

This stranger whose flesh we never ate,
who, rather, sat at table with us, eating,
who for our sakes clothed himself in pelts like ours
and went away far all times to everywhere until,
clambering down starways into our street,
he stood at the door, the dusk-loaf under his arm,
and unpacked the lamplight of the parlor corner
where he called us to him and told us we were his,
and lost in thought led away our little army
of mimics to parade the deep lanes of silence.
Of our mother we ate always and plentifully,
her body was ours to possess and we did so,
thoughtlessly, yes, and also in adoration.
But how shall we understand this stranger?
and how are we ever to make amends to him?
—who had the power to eat us and didn't,
who consented to abide in one house with us,
and hailed the sun down to make the dinner hour,
and bid bread to rise daily out of white dust,
peopling it with mysterious vacancies,
and new night after old washed the odd smells
from himself with sleep and forgot his strangeness
and was, one moment at dawn, little again,
hungry like us, like us waiting to be fed.
How then can we renew his acquaintance, that boy
lost in the man, this man missing in the world,
walking among all that must be inexplicable?
And how are we to thank him properly?
who salted our cheerful, selfish tongues with farewell,
and gave us his name to ponder, to pass on, to keep.

IRVING FELDMAN

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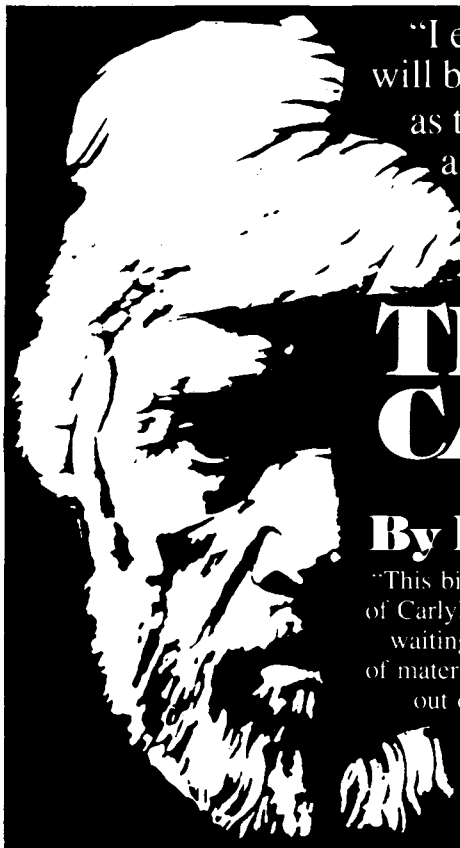
parcel of a violation of the proper religious and political order. In Europe, the commercial, the scripturalist, and the self-governing overlapped to a very important extent. In Islam, there were some who were commercial and scripturalist, and others who practiced self-government, but their overlap was very small. *That* is the difference.

This situation had a further consequence which is insufficiently noted by Pipes. The state generally only controlled a part of the available territory, reluctantly leaving the rest to the self-administering communities. Within the state-controlled zone, the subjects did indeed display the political passivity which Pipes stresses. But the rulers, drawn from the kin-based communities, had (and still have) a strong tendency to operate in patronage networks, which continue to be a marked feature of the politics of Muslim lands. The patronage style is the translation into an urban or modern setting of the political style of that part of the population which does have a tradition of and aptitude for participation.

WHAT concerns us, however, is how this structure reacts to the trauma of foreign impact, of alien economic, military, and technological superiority. This isn't simply a matter of what happens in the individual psyche. We are not dealing just with an intellectual accommodation; the society itself is transformed. With all its technological and administrative attainments, the modern world wholly upsets the previous balance between the urban and rural segments of the society. It upsets the old stalemate, and does it in favor of the central state. In most places the old rural isolation and autonomy, with all its religious accompaniments (saint cults, a crypto-priesthood incompatible with "purer" and more "correct" versions of Islam) are eroded. For the first time the entire society can really aspire, in a realistic manner, to a closer approximation of the old religious blueprint. The endemic revivalism can at long last succeed.

Note that it now has multiple functions. It ratifies and justifies the now definitive ascension of the rustics to the ideals of urban life. It defines the entire community as against the infidel and the foreigner. It provides a charter in terms of which it can also judge and criticize its own rulers, a charter they cannot easily ignore. Thus the erstwhile



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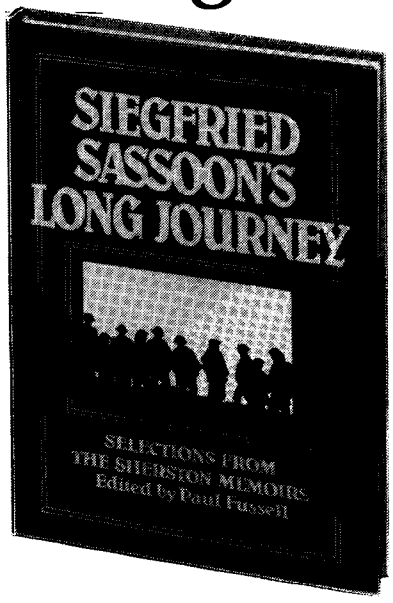

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great tradition becomes a pervasive folk culture.

The main consequence of the disruption of Muslim society by the West and its technology is that purer Islam, once merely the special (almost virtuoso) performance of a fairly small urban elite, has become accessible to all—and not merely accessible, but positively attractive. It enables the ex-rustics to repudiate their own real and recent past, but to do so in the name of another strand of the tradition which had always been present and normative, even when it was honored more in the breach than in the observance. The old elite style takes over and the old folk style is withering away. In all other preindustrial faiths, the old central high culture is the least modernizable element, the most tainted by the *ancien régime* and its failure to stand up to the West. Such a society is then obliged to choose between Westernization and populism (or idealization of the folk culture). Not so in Islam: the old high culture *is* modernizable, and can serve simultaneously as the banner of self-transformation and the perpetuation of an old identity. It can do so because of its detachment from the *ancien régime* (a fact much stressed by Pipes); because it was never carried by a demarcated clerical organization (still less by a hereditary caste), but by an open and loose guild of religious scholars, which can now expand to embrace all those who wish to enter; and because it possesses traits—insistence on the observance of rules, scripturalism, an elegant monotheism, egalitarianism—which seem congruent with the work-ethic and the orderliness required for the drive toward modernization.

PIPES QUOTES the late Gustave von Grunebaum to the effect that the gap between "is" and "ought" is especially wide in Islam. It is not clear that this is really so. It is true that Islam regulates the details of daily life, as does Judaism, and does so in a way which may be hard to implement in the context of tribal life. But these requirements are not so terrible for townsmen, and everyone is now becoming a townsman, even in the villages. The religious requirements do not impose some impossible ideals of selflessness, otherworldliness, brotherhood, or abnegation, which could only be sustained during inevitably ephemeral periods of enthusiasm. They only require that a set of fairly concrete rules be kept. It is not obvious that this is irksome. On the contrary, it may provide a welcome sense of identity and community.

Pipes's failure to understand the logic of reformism comes out most markedly in his rather misleading treatment of Algeria. It is absurd to call it the most secularized country in Islam. Revivalist Islam dominates its moral climate, and was crucial as a form of proto-nationalism which had prepared the struggle for independence. Algeria is to Islam what Eire is to Catholicism, a land where a leaderless rural proletariat in the end had to define itself in terms of religion, for it had nothing else. All this is not contradicted by the fact that in independent Algeria, the Mamluks keep the ulama in check: a separation of powers between the monopolists of force and the monopolists of legitimacy is something which Pipes must surely be familiar with from his own historical work, and modern Algeria has reproduced it.

THUS PIPES seems to miss the distinctiveness of the Muslim situation, just as he is probably too much impressed by certain seeming parallels with Judaism and Protestantism. Jewish communities living as minorities in a modernizing world probably were destined for that secularization and abandonment of legalism which Pipes predicts for Islam; but it does not follow that Muslims, who dominate the countries they live in, face the same fatality. Pipes also seems to me to misuse the notion of "antinomianism." Not all Protestants were antinomians; on the contrary, many took rules very seriously. Some early Protestants became antinomians for kicks, so to speak—the violation of revered rules was even more exciting than their dutiful observance. But that has nothing to do with latter-day antinomianism, the familiar kind in which a woolly unspecific moralism replaces a rule-bound ethic, simply because neither the rules nor their underlying theology are taken seriously any longer. I see no evidence for such a development in Islam so far.

Pipes may still be right in the long run. In the end faith may weaken after all. I am not in the prophecy business. I also think he is right when he says that oil will not make so very much difference to the cultural development of Muslim lands. But so far there is little evidence for his "optimistic" thesis (from the viewpoint of Western liberals), and I have attempted to sketch a model of the underlying situation which would explain why this is so. Still, the debate is interesting, and Pipes has made a stimulating contribution to it.

ERNEST GELLNER

Ernest Gellner is the author of *Muslim Society* (Cambridge University Press). His *Nations and Nationalism* was recently published by Cornell University Press.

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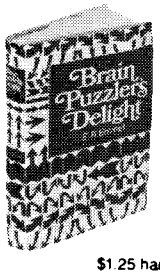

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END OF A LOVE AFFAIR

Pitch Dark
by Renata Adler

(Knopf, 192 pp., $12.95)

Back in 1976, when Renata Adler first turned her hand from journalism to fiction, my neighborhood library purchased a copy of her novel, *Speedboat*, and encased it in clear plastic and slapped a large, sticky white label over the author's face on the back of the book. I can personally vouch for the stickiness of the label, because as I read I kept asking myself, "Who *is* this person?" and checking and rechecking the jacket photo. It was useless, of course, for all I found was a rectangle stamped with due-dates, and when I picked at it with my fingernails and even with a kitchen knife (first making sure I was unobserved), it refused to budge. I can remember the frustration to this day—as I remember *Speedboat*, which was a wonderfully fresh and thoughtful book, written as if the author neither knew nor cared how other people wrote; she would proceed in her own remarkable way.

Her second novel necessarily lacks that element of surprise; we know her by now. But it conveys the same sense of freshness, or originality practiced not for its own sake but because the author is absolutely desperate to tell us how things are just as forthrightly and truthfully as possible. Or maybe it's not so much how things are as what is felt—what her heroine feels upon arriving at the frayed, sad, uncertain end of a love affair.

Even with her opening remarks, Kate—who is the narrator as well as the heroine—shows herself obsessed with getting this story across to us exactly right. Where to start? we hear her wondering, and she begins first one way and then another, discarding whole paragraphs as they prove unsatisfactory.

> He knew that she had left him when she began to smoke again.
>
> Is that where it begins?
>
> I don't know. I don't know where it begins. It is where I am.
>
> . . . Why don't you begin with at first?
>
> Look, you can begin with at first, or it seems, or once upon a time.
>
> Or in the city of P.
>
> Or in the city of P. In the rain. But I can't. It is not what I know how to do.
>
> Well, you must get these things straight, you know, resolve them in your mind before you write them down.

But she doesn't get them straight; that's not her style. Instead, she presents us with a scattering of fragments, stray bits and pieces that she trusts will come to have meaning for us. Some of the fragments float past over and over, at first unexplained—brief sentences like "Quanta, Amy said, on the train," and "Not here, Diana said, to her lasting regret," and "What do you tell the Sanger people? Lily asked." Eventually these sentences are given a context; it's as if they had to ripen first. Other fragments work more as the refrain in a love song might: "Did I throw the most important thing perhaps, by accident, away?" and "How could I know that every time you had a choice you would choose the other thing?"

Like *Speedboat*, *Pitch Dark* gives the effect of an intelligent, wry, rather quirky woman lying awake in the small hours, staring at the ceiling and sorting over her life. There's the same reflectiveness, the same insomniac earnestness in her voice, the same eerie immediacy in the recollected voices of others. Curious and sometimes comical questions snag her attention. What steps, what peculiar procession of events, led the first football quarterback to think up the custom of wiping his hands on a towel draped over the center's rear end? And isn't it likely that the *Odyssey*'s tale of Penelope weaving and unweaving was merely an alibi, invented because when Ulysses returned, Penelope had "two difficult circumstances to explain. The presence of the suitors, and how very little weaving she had done"?

As the fragments collect, the situation emerges. Kate's lover is named Jake, he's married, he has grown children. He and Kate have been together for a long while, perhaps too long. Kate

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Illus.: Detail from Manet's Gare Saint-Lazare, courtesy National Gallery of Art

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should probably have said good-bye some time ago. Midway through the book, she describes a past trip to Ireland where she encountered nothing but blank looks and hostility and deception. It was a solitary journey, nothing to do with Jake, but it effectively symbolizes her terrible feeling of separateness. She recalls that Jake never took her to New Orleans, though he knew how much she wanted to go, and that he wouldn't give her the name of his tree sprayers, or his building contractor, or his backhoe operators, though she asked for them repeatedly. All trivial and even amusing complaints, as she is the first to admit; but then at unexpected moments the larger, deeper complaints break through:

> I remember this word, that look, that small inflection, after all this time. I used to hold them, trust them, read them like a rune. Like a sign that there was a house, a billet, a civilization where we were. I look back and I think I was just there all alone. Collecting wisps and signs. Like a spinster who did know a young man once and who imagines ever since that she lost a fiancé in the war. Or an old fellow who, having spent months long ago in uniform at some dreary outpost nowhere near any country where there was a front, remembers buddies he never had, dying beside him in battles he was never in.

> You said you wouldn't be having an affair with [a secretary or a blonde in a chorus line], but the truth is, we would probably be better off if you were. If I were that secretary or that blonde, though as you say your life is built, you would have to find room, make some kind of room. The weeks on the north island in summer, the other island in winter, the hunting and walking weekends, even the occasional junket to the Riviera or to London. Somehow not with me, not with me. Not Christmas, of course, or birthdays, which I know don't really matter. I just don't know quite how I let it happen. Perhaps I had no choice, or perhaps you never loved me quite enough, and I didn't want to know.

At one point, Kate mentions a journal that she kept in her twenties. Her entries covered a Sunday to the Wednesday of the following week; after that she wrote no more. What stopped her, she says, was that when she read back over the journal, it struck her as incomprehensible. "There were no events, few names, no facts, no indication whatever of what *happened*, apart from this gloom, that cheering up, this gloom again." In a sense, Kate could be speaking of *Pitch Dark*. The book is not a narrative of events—although a few events do occur here—but a description of a certain weighted moment in a woman's life.

Can such a moment make for a satisfying novel? That's up to the individual reader, I suppose. If you read these fragments in hope of some forward motion—some conclusive final goal—you'll be disappointed. But if you simply allow them to settle in their own patterns, flashing light where they will, you'll find *Pitch Dark* a bright kaleidoscope of a book.

ANNE TYLER

THE CHURCHILLIAD

Finest Hour: Winston S. Churchill 1939-1941 by Martin Gilbert

(Houghton Mifflin, 1308 pp., $40)

There are two heroes in this story: Winston Churchill and Martin Gilbert. The Promethean career of the one has inspired the Herculean labors of the other. In fact, in comparison with Gilbert's epic toil, Hercules got off lightly. When Gilbert took over this authorized biography, following Randolph Churchill's death in 1968, the series was a mere two volumes and fourteen hundred pages long. It had reached 1914 and Churchill's stormy tenure in the Admiralty during World War I. Since then Gilbert has logged in four more volumes, between them five thousand pages, not to mention eight "companion" volumes of documents, ten thousand pages more. Then there have been the Churchill spin-offs—the light industrial goods alongside the heavy items (a television series, companion books to go with the television series, and so on). This prodigious output—and Gilbert has written amply on contemporary and Jewish history as well—is likely to send most historians, more at ease with the judicious footnote or the learned article, running for their smelling salts.

But then Martin Gilbert is not like most historians. He happily abandoned a teaching career for the Churchill commission and repaired to a house near Oxford which he custom-designed for the job. This became the free-lance historian's dream palace, filled with manuscript tables, charts (Gilbert is an afficionado of maps and has produced a useful series of historical atlases), tracked lighting, an academic version of Churchill's own Operations Room. Still, for all this production-line efficiency, he is really a throwback to the heroic days of nineteenth-century multi-tomed political biography. In that grand tradition he has constructed a colossal historical mausoleum from millions of minute bricks of information, all impeccably arranged according to the strictest laws of chronological narrative. It need hardly be said that this titanic style of historical biography is unfashionable. Few working historians nowadays have the time to contemplate anything as grandiose. Even fewer, though, have the inclination. Instead of tackling the lives of Great Men, academic historians now favor precisely the opposite approach, in which small episodes (Martin Guerre or Montaillou) are invested with exemplary significance, and are more often on social than political topics. Death is altogether a more fashionable subject these days than war or taxes. The panoramic canvas has been replaced by the historiographical micro-chip.

Immured in his commission, Martin Gilbert has perhaps not noticed any of this, or has assumed it will all go away by the time he finishes. (He is probably right.) His own style is fantastically and unapologetically positivist, setting down almost every known fact about his hero, and in some cases many competing versions of a single event. No aspect of Churchill's politics, or his conduct of the war, or his working methods, or even his family life has been omitted. The color of his siren suits (blue or red), the strength of

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his whiskies and soda (surprisingly weak)—all is presented for us to sift and sort, retain or dismiss, as we see fit. This is history not just as chronicle but as total recall. It is also deliberately impersonal, a presentation in which the historian abdicates the role of commentator, critic, or interpreter. (It is way at the other pole from the tomes that American biographers like Robert Caro use as forms of documented incrimination.) Gilbert writes as if Tacitus and Gibbon had never penned a line. There are no judgments, not the merest hint of a cavil. Nor are there the conventional literary framings—no fanfare at the outset, nor drumroll at the conclusion. The narrative simply begins: "At eleven o'clock on the morning of September 3rd 1939 . . ." and goes on like that for another 1274 pages. It is a Churchilliad, and Gilbert is its bard.

What is it like to read? Reading is not really what one does with a Gilbert Churchill, any more than with, say, Pepys's diary. Confronted with this mighty ocean of narrative the only possible response is total immersion. The great tidal wave of detail plunges the reader almost involuntarily into Churchill's life during the first two grim years of the war. One does not so much read the life, one accompanies it, as if peering over Churchill's burly shoulder. Of course the life itself is not without interest. It has already drawn biographers like moths to the flame, and they have usually been badly singed. In the past year alone, the humdrum Ted Morgan and the portentous William Manchester have both made an effort to capture the young Churchill. Manchester's slapdash study, with its cartoon-strip account of British politics and culture and its rhinestone-studded prose, looks particularly gaudy alongside the Churchilliad.

Gilbert has been faithful to Randolph Churchill's injunction—"let him be his own biographer"—and allowed his subject to tell much of the story through speeches, conversations, and letters, as well as official documents. The recollections of personal secretaries, civil servants, young staff aides, and the good use of memoirs lend intimacy and immediacy to Gilbert's vast collective portrait. There are unforgettable vignettes: receiving an assistant during the blitz "wrapped only in a huge bath towel looking like one of the later Roman Emperors"; singing "Ole Man River" in his car after speaking in Parliament of destroyers for bases as an Anglo-American relationship that "like the Mississippi just keeps rolling along"; pressing the revolting concoction of Bovril and sardines on a politely amenable aide; rapping on a front door and greeting the butler with a cheery "Goebbels and Goering here to report"; and dictating to his secretary from his flower-chintzed four-poster, chewing a cigar, sipping soda water, and fidgeting his toes beneath the bedclothes.

DRAWING OF WINSTON CHURCHILL BY DAVID SCHORR

The history, though, is not just chatty gossip. Against all odds, it succeeds in conveying the frightening bleakness of the spring of 1940, when Hitler seemed unstoppable and European democracy appeared to be closing down for the season. What followed in Britain for the remainder of that year is one of the most stirring chronicles of modern history, the majestic moral dimension of which has been blown away by Woukian winds of cliché and the debasement of Churchillian rhetoric. (A Congressman was recently heard to say that the invasion of Grenada was America's "finest hour.") Amidst all folk memories of Britain Can Take It and the comforting irrevocability of Churchill's eventual triumph, it is easy to forget just how desperate the crisis was when he became Prime Minister. That May 10 was one of the worst days of the war, when the Germans invaded Belgium and the Netherlands and the awesome power of the blitzkrieg was made apparent in the West. The "phoney war" had culminated in the miserable fiasco of the Norwegian landings, and consternation had replaced uncertainty as the dominant mood of the country. The effect of Churchill's appointment to the supreme office he had always coveted was electrifying. By sheer force of personality, transmitted to the British Parliament and to the people through radio broadcasts, he turned fear into fortitude. By telling the truth he actually succeeded in making things seem better, not worse. As Harold Nicolson shrewdly noted, the same words in Neville Chamberlain's mouth would have left his audience in a mood of dejection; in Churchill's they sounded a note of hope and defiance. There is no question that this was one of the rare moments in history when the presence of a single man altered what was, and what was not, possible.

How did he make that difference? Precisely because of its painstaking elaboration of detail, Martin Gilbert's book is the only account that can show the mechanics of inspiration at work. In essence they were the result of the extraordinary effect that Churchill's own

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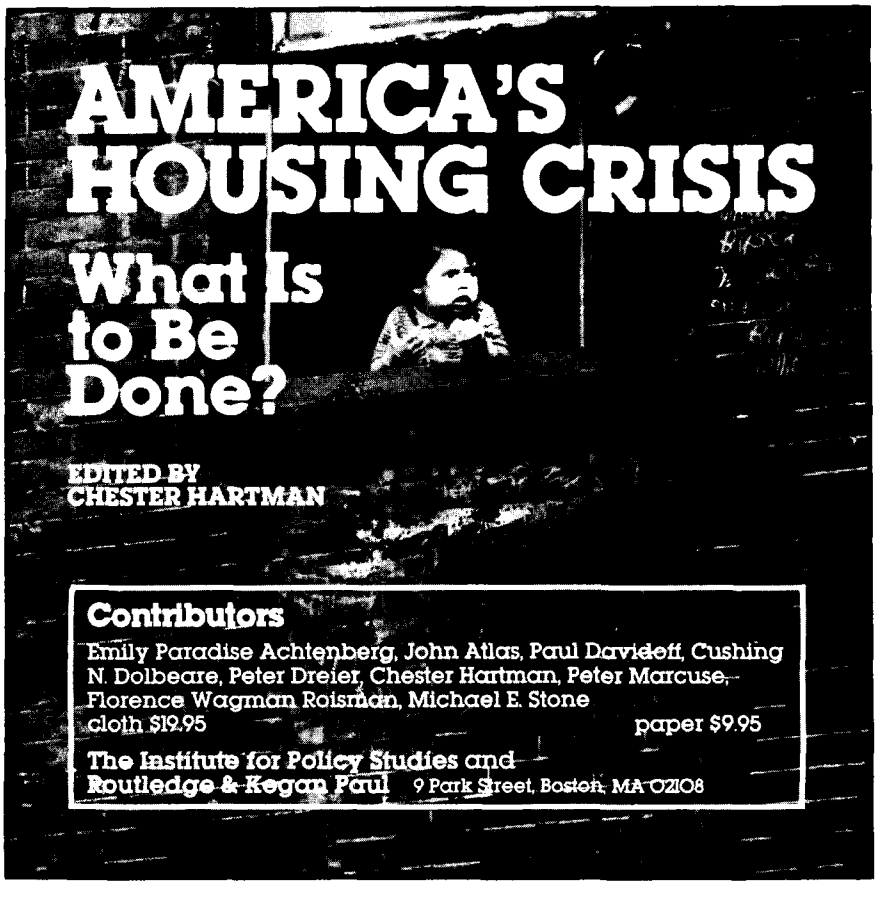

unambiguous dedication and his jaunty bravura had on others—on immediate colleagues, on junior ministers, on the people at large. This peculiar chemistry, the essence of Churchillian charisma, can be reduced to four elements.

The first indispensable component of his leadership was staggeringly and indefatigably hard work. Churchill was sixty-one when he became Prime Minister, but his hours and his devotion to detail left his bright young assistants dropping in their tracks. In the 1930s he had mastered the most intricate military information, so that he could out-brief the government ministers he harried so mercilessly in the House of Commons. When he was First Lord of the Admiralty at the outset of the war, and beset with naval emergency, he discovered somehow that there was an insufficient supply of fish being caught off the coast. In went the details; out went the famous order, "We must have a policy of utmost fish. Report before midnight." His capacity to absorb, analyze, and act on mountains of material was an immense asset. It meant that he delegated work as sense rather than laziness commanded. It also instilled a healthy respect among subordinates for their chief's omniscience.

THE SECOND element in Churchill's leadership was his impressively detailed grasp of military strategy. It is easy to overlook the obvious fact that, more than any of the other war leaders, and certainly more than either Marshal Stalin or the warlords in Berlin and Rome, Churchill was in his own right a great commander. This is not to say that he did not commit blunders during the war—he was perhaps still too much haunted by the ghosts of Gallipoli and too much attracted to "sideshows" in the Balkans and the Aegean. But he had an unerring nose for fine commanders, and he stuck by them even when they were drawing flack from their staff. Sir Hugh Dowding, the chief of Fighter Command, still for the most part unsung in Britain, was both a genius and a hero, and Churchill only let him go after the contest for British skies had been won and Dowding was plainly prostrated by the effort. Most of all, Churchill's detailed grasp of logistics and strategy meant that he could talk to his generals and admirals directly, and construct with them, at each moment of the war, a careful order of priorities.

The third component of Churchill's

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charisma was that for which he is most remembered: the passion and the dignity of his rhetoric. Martin Gilbert cites many of his speeches, familiar and unfamiliar, at pleasing length and in full metaphorical ripeness. The thickness of this documentation makes it possible to see just how the great orations were put together from the capacious filing cabinet of his literary memory and the emotional impetus of the moment. The notion of anything so intellectually supine as a speech writer, let alone a bank of them, would have appalled Churchill, not only because his feeling for the cadences and the inflections of the language was so fine, but because during the war rhetoric was not manipulated for personal promotion. It is apparent, though Gilbert does not say so, that the effect of Churchill's speeches was to break the crust of the British class system, and to bring together those who were divided by accent, manners, education, and fortune. Churchill created a patriotic community of common history, language, and sentiment. And to read Churchill, of course, is to hear him. He played on his oratory like some mighty brass instrument, muting and swelling as occasion and audience demanded. When he addressed the French—"*Francais, c'est moi, Churchill qui vous parle*"—he conscripted the ghost of Napoleon exhorting his troops against the Prussians, but was tactful enough not to mention that the occasion was Waterloo. Even though there might have been bitterness against him for his destruction of the French fleet at Mers-el-Kebir, at least one of his listeners thought "every word was like a transfusion of drops of blood."

NONE OF THIS could have been accomplished by mere technical facility. Churchill made his listeners brave because his own moral clarity led him to attribute the best possible motives to his compatriots. He made people want to live up to this generosity of judgment, to be ashamed to fall short. At a cabinet meeting after the fall of France, he repudiated the slightest thought of coming to terms with That Man (as Halifax might have done) by telling his colleagues that he *knew* they would tear him from his seat if he so much as hinted at it. Thus he associated them with his own resoluteness. "If this island story of ours is to end, let it end only when each of us lies choking in his own blood upon the ground."

This last quality of Churchill's was, in the end, that on which the rest depended: his unswerving moral decency. This shines through the pages of Gilbert's account, without any effort on the part of the author to canonize his subject. For Churchill's goodness was not to be confused with saintliness. He relished the reputation of an endearing rogue, though he could be brusque and ungracious at times. One of the most touching and famous letters printed here is his wife's warning not to alienate his devoted subordinates by trampling on their feelings. He savored power and authority as he did a fat cigar, and during his long career had made more than his share of blunders in and out of office. His contribution to the debate over India had been blimpish absurdity; his loyalty to Edward VIII displayed dreadful lack of judgment. He was not wartless—but his warts were just that, imperfections on the face of virtue.

Winston Churchill emerges as a generous man, even to a fault. He despised vindictiveness and stood loyally by some who did not always deserve his kindness. Possibly the most surprising fact to emerge from Gilbert's volume is the exceptional tenderness and sensitivity he showed to Neville Chamberlain on succeeding him as Prime Minister. He resisted all attempts to have him ejected from the cabinet (Lloyd George naming it as his price of entry), and through the long period of his cancer never neglected to brief Chamberlain as fully as possible on every piece of business. Even when Chamberlain's illness made him retire from the government, Churchill offered to inform him of all major decisions. When he died in November 1940, Churchill cried at his bier, and reserved one of his most moving speeches for the memorial service. All this was transparently sincere and deeply felt. It seems that Churchill saw Chamberlain not as some craven appeaser, but as a tragic figure victimized by the fickleness of history and devoted to the noble cause of peace.

Churchill, who had had so protean a career, remained hopeless as a party tactician. He had never really felt comfortable with the clubland Tories, nor even with the plaid-breeches squirarchy to whom he was related. He was as near to a populist as any British politician can come. His wife was quite right in her attempt to persuade him to de-

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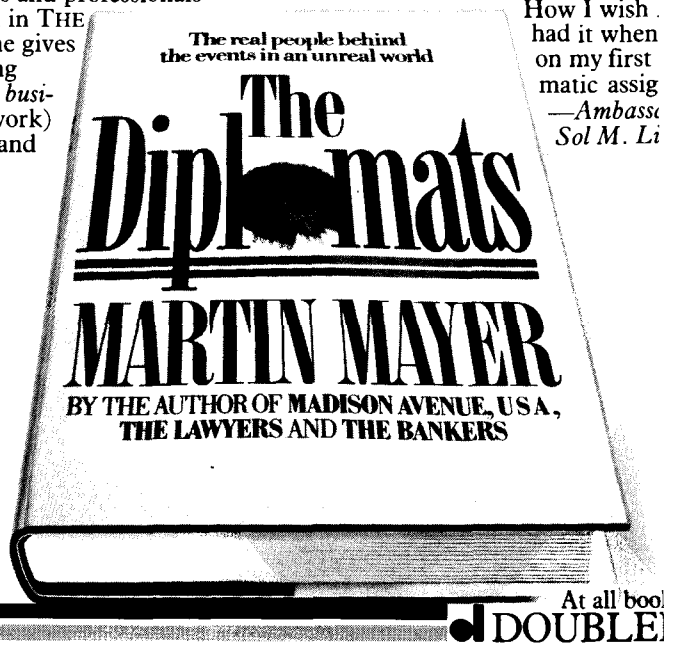

At all boo

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cline the leadership of the Conservatives when Chamberlain died. She understood, perhaps better than Churchill himself, that for better or worse he had acquired iconic status as a symbol of the endurance of British culture. His true political place lay not with any one party or group but with Parliament as a whole.

This was because Churchill embodied, without ever meaning to, a glorious illusion about British history: that at its heart lay a family bond that transcended all divisions of class and party. It was typical that although he loathed his old school, Harrow, he consented to visit it on condition that the boys sang the school songs; he went away watery-eyed, with the feeling that he had touched the national spirit once more. In retrospect it seems almost a historical miracle that, at a time when they were so mercilessly tested, the western democracies managed to throw up two leaders—Roosevelt, of course, the other—who inspired not only respect but love.

None of this adds up to a definitive answer as to why Britain survived. There are more impersonal reasons to be found in this book, and in others: Hitler's folly in abandoning the strikes on British airfields for civilian bombing; the German failure to press an invasion in the summer of 1940; their inability to close the Atlantic routes for vital American supplies. There are other, quieter heroes: Dowding; the long-suffering Jack Ismay who served as formal Chief of Staff in the most gloomy times; Harry Hopkins, whom Churchill immensely admired and on whom he pinned his hopes for an Anglo-American alliance. There are the unsung and the anonymous: fighter pilots without whose inexhaustible courage the battle for the skies over Britain would have been lost. There are inimitable stiff upper lips all over the place, the stiffest of all belonging to the butler of the Reform Club who answered the phone the night that Pall Mall was put to the torch and responded to a request for information with a Jeevesian "The Club is burning, sir."

In all these circumstances and contingencies, however, nothing stands out from Gilbert's monumental account more clearly than Churchill's own part in moving his countrymen to extraordinary efforts and sacrifices. He told the millions who hung on every word that issued from the wireless that "the curse of Nazism will be lifted from the brow of mankind" and that "wicked man, the repository and embodiment of many forms of soul-destroying hatred" would be vanquished. In private he was not always so sanguine. He forced himself and others, he admitted, to be brave "because everyone realised how near death and ruin we stood. Not only individual death which is the universal experience, but incomparably more commanding the life of Britain, her message and her glory."

The terror of imminent extinction flickers intermittently through Martin Gilbert's crowded narrative. But whenever it begins to rise with the tempo of accumulating disasters, Churchill's presence, too, rises above the panic, like a great granite cliff. I suppose that is what our parents felt and what sustained them in the nightmare of 1940. This is a rare thing then: a vast biography in which the stature of its subject is enhanced rather than diminished with every page and every document. The only somber reflection on putting it down is the certainty that we shall not look on his like again.

SIMON SCHAMA

Simon Schama is a professor of history at Harvard University.

MIDNIGHT'S OTHER CHILDREN

Shame
by Salman Rushdie

(Knopf, 317 pp., $13.95)

When *Midnight's Children* appeared a few years ago, Salman Rushdie was "admitted to the ranks," as critics say, of the world's great writers, and those who did the admitting wrote as if a South American writer was suddenly born in the subcontinent. Rushdie seemed condemned to be always compared to Gárcia Márquez, and more generally to that kind of inflammation of the imagination, that tropical expressionism, to which a lot of literary taste has surrendered. Magic realism is its latest label. Rushdie surely shares its phantasmagoric ways, its interest in the knowledge that is turned up by delirium, its visionary violence, its appetite for epic and for epic exaggeration. This new novel will show, however, that the acclaim was only approximate. The shock of *Shame* lies in its fidelity to reality. It is a moderately distorted report on a world that is already deranged. This great English novel of Pakistan asks to be admired not for the richness of its invention, though admiration is plainly deserved, but for the truth of its judgments. It is a reckoning with a whole country and a whole culture; which requires not only language, but courage. Rushdie, then, is a different sort of fantasist. He is not that free. There is more pain than play. The extravagance is an emergency. The novel is more closely stuck to things than its style makes it seem; and it is punctuated with personal and political commentary in which all fictional pretension is dropped. When he calls his manner of writing "off-centering," he is not falsely modest. That is all, alas for those who live in "not quite Pakistan," that it is. For this reason Rushdie recalls Kundera, rather, though he lacks Kundera's metaphysical concentration and his sublime silences. This fairy tale is not the invention of a world but the completion of a world. Here the miraculous is a tool of analysis.

Shame is the story of Pakistan. Its heroes and heroines are (but of course they are not) Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, called Iskandar Harappa, and his wife Rani Harappa; and Mohammad Zia ul-Haq, called Raza Hyder, and his wife Bilquis Hyder; and their children and their grandchildren; and their soldiers and their divines and their mistresses and their victims. The story is wildly comic and wildly cruel, because of the disparity between the scale of Pakistan's history and the scale of the people who determine it. The people, in Rushdie's telling, are small squalid little creatures, "God-absorbed" and perfectly profane, unbecoming to the sacred history of a

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society. The history, however, is large; indeed, it is too large. Pakistan is "a palimpsest" that leaves Pakistanis with the problem of "what to retain, what to dump."

Rushdie's predicament is that his national history is vivid but his national identity is not. He is a child of the *mohajirs*, the Muslims from India who emigrated to Pakistan after the excruciating partition. But he is not deracinated; he is overly racinated. He is not prepared to put down the Indian past. And he writes about the whole moral and cultural mess in English, the language of still another tradition (". . . this Angrezi that I am forced to write"). There is a character in the novel who has three mothers—Portnoy, hold your tongue—and they finally destroy him. The threats of immensity and insignificance, then, of ancient Indian grandeur and modern Pakistani grandiosity, of Muslim purity and the corruption of Muslims, all hang over this strange saga, and the bizarre bloodbath with which it concludes makes you wonder if even Rushdie has successfully met them.

HANGING OVER it, too, is the sentiment that gives the novel its name, and for his exploration of the emotional economy of his culture Rushdie deserves its (and not only its) gratitude. The emotional life he describes is extreme, and in an advanced state of excitement; it is madly disciplined or madly dissolute; it is fearfully prepsychological. According to Rushdie, it swings between shame and shamelessness, and every swing leaves wounds. Rushdie is withering about what he calls "the stink of honor." He gives in detail its destructive consequences. A swimmer botches a dive "so completely that he preferred to drown rather than emerge from the waters of his shame," and up from there all the way to the affairs of state, where all kinds of physical and political outrages are owed to this horror of humiliation. It is not far from mortification to murder.

Rushdie's account of the relationship of shame to violence is unforgettable. "Not long ago," he begins,

> in the East End of London, a Pakistani father murdered his only child, a daughter, because by making love to a white boy she had brought such dishonor upon her family that only her blood could wash away the stain. The tragedy was intensified by the father's enormous and obvious love for his butchered child, and by the

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1963–Diem coup successful. (see June 30)

1972–The *Washington Post* reports on White House study requiring "manufacture and installation of special FM receivers in every home radio and television set, boat and automobile, which could be automatically turned on by the government to contact every citizen, whether awake or asleep," and called for "full coverage, 100 percent of the population."

1982–*Detroit Free Press* reports a Santa Clara, Ca., chief parole officer proposes attaching computers to parolees to monitor their whereabouts and also the use of electronic implants to control violent criminals.

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> beleagured reluctance of his friends and relatives . . . to condemn his actions. . . . I, too, found myself understanding the killer.

The most moving figure in the novel is Raza Hyder's idiot daughter Sufiya Zinobia, who should have been a son. She is a kind of infernal incarnation of a whole people's shame; cursed by an uncanny consciousness of the inner ignominies of everyone around her, she is seized by a state of burning ("blushing is slow burning") and turns to slaughter, tearing the heads of men from their necks with her helpless evil hands. When Raza Hyder, having toppled Iskandar Harappa and made it sleazy to the top, fears that his daughter's crimes may undo him, he conspires in her murder, too. But without success; she is the national demon, and cannot be destroyed.

Whence all this shame? Rushdie does not say. There is a clue, though, in the novel's constant noise. This is the picture of a society in which the soul has no corners in which to hide. All is public. The people in this story offer no resistance to the judgments of others. (It is as if the social sense has skipped the superego and lodged deep in the ego.) When they do resist, lives are lost. Shame makes them feel like dying, or it makes them feel like killing.

You read this book with a flushed feeling of repugnance, with what Dickens called "the attraction of repulsion." It is an original study of the dark side of the species. Still, it is not hard to read. It is, in the first place, hilarious; the tawdriness of third world politics, for example, has rarely been so well captured. A soldier makes bold to suggest the idea of a coup to General Hyder, and there follows this exchange. "For God's sake, man. Nobody's going to court-martial you. Just get your priorities right. Let's win a few polo matches before thinking of taking over the country." "Very good, sir." Shuja controlled himself. "I shall convey the General's view to the polo squad, sir."

It is, moreover, written with tenderness, which not even the sexual and scatological grotesqueries can mask. Rushdie is brilliant, but he is not like the heartless Naipaul.

Indeed, compared to Naipaul the unsentimental Rushdie is a sentimental fool. There is a good reason. He is not a man without a place. He is a man with a place that is hard to bear. The difference matters. Rushdie calls this "a novel of leave-taking," which is a familiar kind of modern novel, but he writes affectingly, a little even to his own surprise, of the young polity's hopes. He writes most affectingly of their women. They are twisted and they are abandoned, but they are not insulted; it is the men who insult them who are insulted. Rushdie's women are the custodians of his meanings, and not just the terrible Sufiya. We meet Bilquis, who is doomed to marry Hyder and bear Sufiya, in the years of partition, in the middle of a religious riot, her clothes torn off in a crazed crowd that has gathered outside the ruins of her father's movie theater. (He blew it up with himself inside, satisfied that he had insulted the Hindus by screening a Randolph Scott cattle Western.) Bilquis, we are told,

> failed to notice her nudity because the universe was ending. . . . In that generation many women, ordinary, decent, respectable ladies of the type to whom nothing ever happens, to whom nothing is supposed to happen except marriage children death, had this strange sort of story to tell.

And Rani Harappa, banished to her distant estate by her husband and again by her husband's executioners, ends her days rocking on a verandah and knitting a series of eighteen shawls, on which she tells the tale of the rake Iskander Harappa's rise and the tyrant Iskander Harappa's fall, the whole ugly narrative embroidered quietly, to be kept for her daughter, by a smashed-up woman.

There is compassion behind Rushdie's cruelty. The mannerisms of the marvelous do not interest him, and neither does the glamor of the homeless. I wonder how Pakistani readers will read his book. Bringing the bad news is a brave thing to do if you intend to stay. "Realism," as Rushdie observes, "can break a writer's heart," and a reader's heart, too. Still, happy is the man who can see so clearly.

LEON WIESELTIER

THE WAY TO AUTUMN

The Odes of John Keats by Helen Vendler

(Harvard University Press, 330 pp., $18.50)

This intense study makes one great demand of its readers: they must have in mind, for any given stretch of exposition, a good many details from all of the six major odes; a text for each poem appears at the start of the corresponding chapter, and helps to lighten the task considerably. A fair review needs to make the same demand without offering any comparable assistance: those who have not read the poems lately are advised to read them now and come back when they are finished. Most such experiments in reacquaintance will leave three impressions of the poems as a group. First, Keats's invention, in "Ode to Psyche," of the mind itself as the "main region" of his song, is the single gesture that creates the inward psychological subject of all the odes. Second, the "Ode to a Nightingale" seems to carry the most simply appealing melody, with the most directly emotional rhythms of rise and fall. And third, the ode "To Autumn" is the most delicate in its tone of feeling, the fullest in its tacit identification of landscape with consciousness. By comparison, the "Ode on Melancholy" may feel embarrassingly homiletic, the "Ode on a Grecian Urn" divided between its wish for a cold sublimity and its responsiveness to human passions, and the "Ode on Indolence" an indecisive sort of warm-up. This, it should be added, is our modern consensus. Readers of Keats's time, or of the World War I generation, would have cared for different poems for different reasons.

Helen Vendler's argument is that the earlier odes lead up to the ode "To Autumn." She shows Keats improving gradually, with false steps which she documents carefully. By treating the odes not only as a sequence but a progressive sequence, she gains some drama for the story, at the sacrifice of some credibility. The whole development

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that interests her takes place within a period of approximately six months, and it would be best for her analysis if the odes came evenly spaced from each other. As it happens, the first five come nearly at once, and "To Autumn" so much later that one is tempted to take the absence of "ode" from the title as a clue that Keats did not regard it as part of the group. Further, Vendler's ordering (Indolence, Psyche, Nightingale, Urn, Melancholy, Autumn) does not accord with Jack Stillinger's edition of 1978 (in which these would be 5, 1, 2, 3, 4, 6), yet she offers no reason for correcting him apart from her own conviction. Still, the argument is original. It begins some way into Keats's last phase, where other critics have been content to suppose his work already mature; and it explains as partial failures, or only interim successes, three poems which they have often regarded as masterpieces. "Other critics" is not an empty phrase, since of all English poets Keats has been the best served by modern criticism. In her opening pages Vendler acknowledges two dozen predecessors. Her list is not exhaustive, and yet she is not much indebted to any of them.

A device by which Vendler proposes to measure Keats's advances within the ode-sequence is what she calls the "constitutive trope." This varies from one poem to the next: taking them again in her order, she finds "dispute" helpful for an understanding of the "Ode on Indolence," "reduplication" for the "Ode to Psyche," and so on through "reiteration," "interrogation," "admonition," to "enumeration" for "To Autumn." The patterns that these words name are not what any other critic would call tropes—a term usually reserved for strong figures that twist the meaning of a word. They are, simply, patterns, or pedagogic aids to reading. If one thinks of a chain of powerful questions as essential to the effect of the "Ode on a Grecian Urn"—"What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?/ What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?"—then the word "interrogation" justifies itself, without our having to pretend it gives us a new trope. Even with the help of "admonition," however, the "Ode on Melancholy" may remain the most elusive of the group. In her somewhat perplexed admiration for this poem Vendler writes from a perspective natural to most readers today. But the same "Ode on Melancholy" would have been the poem of the group most accessible to Keats's predecessors in the English ode, Thomas Gray and William Collins. Its allegory, which we find strained, was at home in their kind of poetry. It had become a conscious formality by the time Coleridge wrote "Hence, viper thoughts"; but to Keats that mode of address seems to come effortlessly again, and we are not sure what to make of his dexterity.

In arranging a deliberate buildup for Keats's triumphal march at the end, Vendler is obliged to discover a fair number of shortcomings in the earlier odes, which readers not attuned to her story have either passed over or refused to consider as faults. The larger problems she discovers in Keats's maturing view of poetry are often of her own devising. Thus, in the "Ode to a Nightingale" he is said to show dissatisfaction with his "postulate . . . that lyric art, of which the model is natural music, is self-expressive, a vehicle of sensation, nonmimetic, deceptive, uttered to no particular ear, and beautiful without respect to truth and verisimilitude." Outside of this book, of course, Keats never credited anything like such a postulate, and its only function is to move the argument forward. Since we are two notches past Indolence but still three short of Autumn, something must be wrong, and this tells us what it is. Vendler's more straightforward prospects of the task ahead can seem equally arbitrary. Because Keats went on writing at all after the odes "To a Nightingale" and "On a Grecian Urn," we must, she supposes, "presume [that these poems] were still in some way unsatisfactory to him." It would be just as safe to assume that he went on writing because he was delighted with what he had done so far.

Of Keats's actual opinions, about poetry or anything else, we hear very little in this book. Vendler is as minimal as Cleanth Brooks in her use of biographical detail, and fragmentary in her dealings with all of Keats's poetry before the volume of 1820. She excludes on principle most of his friendships, enthusiasms, hobbyhorses, prose, and sex. (In a curious moment she cites, as a mark of his identification with the nightingale, the fact that the bird is "sexless, [being] no more than a 'wandering voice.' ") Nevertheless, the poet she has imagined is temporarily faithful to many postulates like the one just cited. He believes that "the diction of dream and waking" is "a way of making truth-claims." He conceives of a flat opposition of sensation to thought, and beauty to truth, only at last coming to realize their interdependence. And in the "Ode to Psyche" he writes a poem which aims, "whatever its sensual metaphors (and these will demand their own recognition later), at a complete, exclusive, and lasting annihilation of the senses in favor of the brain." The "recognition" seems plain enough, however, in a phrase of the "Ode to Psyche" itself—"branched thoughts, new grown with pleasant pain." Vendler, in short, furnishes the mind of Keats with some silly notions, before she puts in their place some better ones.

ON THE WHOLE, Vendler's bias is ascetic rather than anti-intellectual, and she sees the temptations Keats has to resist as coming with about equal frequency from intellect and from fancy. In the "pained awakenings from fancy" may be found "Keats's most solid poetic strength, a strength which eventually affirms not a vanishing but a discovery." We are asked to trust those pained awakenings. Keats's exhilarations, on the other hand, ought to leave us coldly suspicious: "Though it is true that the sequence about wine follows Keats's usual rhythm of expansion and sinking, the impression left by the stanza (on us as on Byron) is one of feverish and insistent self-manipulation."

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Byron's exact words were: "Such writing is a sort of mental masturbation—he is always f—gg—g his *imagination*.—I don't mean that he is *indecent* but viciously soliciting his own ideas into a state which is neither poetry nor any thing else but a Bedlam vision produced by raw pork and opium." Though Vendler does not give the passage, this must be what she has in mind: there is nothing else remotely like it among Byron's comments on Keats. It does not capture the impression left by any part of the "Ode to a Nightingale"—indeed it was not written about any poem in particular. It is an instance of vulgarity and snobbery working together, and therefore a strange judgment for a modern critic to cite approvingly and in passing. Vendler probably would not go so far as to accuse Keats of frigging his imagination. Yet her willingness to have Bryon as an ally is consistent with her general strictures: she admires Keats in his moods of equilibrium, and distrusts every touch of personal pathos. When she wants to praise lines that might seem to approach the "sublime-pathetic" that Keats appreciated in Milton, she has to clear them of any such feeling. "And, little town, thy streets for evermore/Will silent be. . .": many readers have found in these words a strong current of sympathy. But for Vendler they express "a complete capitulation to mystery," an "admirable acquiescence in ignorance." The negative capability of *this* Keats is strictly negative.

THE TERM OF praise to which Vendler recurs most often is "aesthetic." And a truly aesthetic art-object must be self-enclosed, autonomous, "a system of inexhaustible internal relations." *The Fall of Hyperion* seems to her a failure because Keats's muse, Moneta, and his subject, the Titans, "have not found a common aesthetic territory, or a theoretical base in Keats's letters." Again, the "Ode to a Nightingale" takes a wrong turn because "loading rifts is a retarding aesthetic." The moral appears to be that a great many aesthetic defeats, which look like rhetorical victories, are needed to make a single aesthetic victory. For this critic the ode "To Autumn" is alone a sufficient reward for the long apprenticeship that produced it. She writes fifty-five pages on the poem, and leads in with three pages composed of twenty-two citations from other works by Keats. All that raw matter becomes important as ur-Autumn ode-stuff. In writing his farewell ode, Keats makes the "powerful discovery" of "a form of structural polyphony, in which several forms—each one autonomous, each one pregnant with meaning, each one continued for the full length of the ode—overlap in a palimpsest of effects." So, very near the end of his life, Keats has the good fortune to be aesthetically complete. We may have admired "how great a step he had taken in the submission to reality in introducing, in the 'Ode on Melancholy,' Joy's grape, which is nonetheless permitted to burst gratifyingly on the palate." We must now recognize how far beyond this "To Autumn" reaches, with its fruit which "ascetically remains unconsumed, though crushed out of its former being." To a performance that is chastened, realistic, and wholly serious, Vendler accords her highest praise:

> Lyric—to Keats's supreme joy—admits guiltlessly all five senses, and pleases all five senses, not directly . . . but with "spiritual sweets." Keats's perplexed mind has come to the great discovery that lyric makes sense by giving a natural topography to the algebra of thought. . . . [The poem] moves outward to engirdle the earth. . . . It can remember the songs of spring and it can forget that warm days can ever cease. . . . It is mimetic; it is (in its antiphony) dialectical. . . . Most of all, it is multiple.

"Guiltlessly" perhaps stands out as a vestige of the critic's own asceticism rather than the poet's, and the use of "algebra" may puzzle a reader who has not followed the whole argument of the book. But this word as Vendler employs it refers merely to the compression by which a detail may appear at once sensuous and allegorical. Simple arithmetic will in fact show the reason for her praise. "To Autumn" incorporates every pattern from the earlier five odes. It is therefore at least five times as good; and in describing the effect Vendler plainly shares something of Keats's joy.

In addition to its several interpretations, *The Odes of John Keats* offers miscellaneous suggestions about sources and analogues. The retreat at dawn of the ghost in *Hamlet*, as a source of Keats's "fade" in the "Ode to a Nightingale," sounds reasonable but far from intuitive. On the other hand, the analogues with Yeats, which Vendler finds particularly in the "Ode on Indolence," are good at first and improve on acquaintance. The connection she draws between Keats's Moneta and Spenser's Mutability is immediately persuasive, and will be important to anyone's reading of Keats. And yet, having come this far, she misreads both the tone of Keats's feelings about his muse, and the sense of his presentation: "the blank appearance of [Moneta's] visionless eyes" reminds her chiefly of "art's indifference to its audience." But it is Keats who is indifferent, and Moneta who admonishes him for being so:

> "High prophetess," said I, "purge off
> Benign, if so it please thee, my mind's film."
> "None can usurp this height," returned that shade,
> "But those to whom the miseries of the world
> Are misery, and will not let them rest."

Moneta is visionless because she is beyond education by sight. She keeps the audience for poetry as well as its subject, the fate of others, always before Keats's eyes; the miseries of the world concerned him so much that he could portray the "high prophetess" of his vocation as a being who knew everything about them. In a book full of good things, Vendler nowhere suggests the character of a poet for whom this could have been an appropriate muse.

DAVID BROMWICH

David Bromwich is the author of *Hazlitt: The Mind of a Critic*, to be published by Oxford University Press in January.

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MEET BOB FOREHEAD

Washingtoon
by Mark Alan Stamaty

(Congdon & Weed, unpaginated, $7.95)

A couple of years ago Meg Greenfield, the hard-boiled liberal editor of *The Washington Post* editorial page, invited Mark Alan Stamaty, author of a soft-boiled, hippy-druggy comic strip for New York's *Village Voice*, to spend some time in Washington and find out if it inspired him. This kind of experiment in ironic juxtaposition is a common editor's daydream ("Hey, let's send Norman Mailer to Switzerland and, you know, sort of see what happens."), but most such flashes are quickly forgotten or, if acted upon, end in tears. This one wasn't and didn't. The result, a weekly comic strip called "Washingtoon" on the *Post*'s Op-Ed page (and in the *Voice*), is a wonderfully hallucinogenic view of life in the nation's capital (the consequence, I hasten to assume, of creative genius, not artificial stimuli). Stamaty's Washington is all bright colors and sharp angles, and yet it is somehow truer to real life than the Washington portrayed by (say) Joseph Kraft and most other denizens of Ms. Greenfield's pages.

"Washingtoon" is the saga, with frequent side excursions, of Bob Forehead, a handsome, earnest, pea-brained conservative Congressman of the type that has become common since about 1978. His ruling passion is to appear on television. He originally wanted to be a quiz show host, but finds being a Congressman almost as satisfying. In this first collection of "Washingtoons," Bob is discovered and put into Congress by Gerard Oxboggle, president of the Glominoid Corporation, founds the J.F.K. Lookalike Conservative Caucus, attends the Toxic Wastes Ball, goes on a fact-finding mission to an American client state called Tyrania, and so forth.

Described flatly like this, the humor sounds pretty heavy-handed, but it isn't, for two reasons. First, there's an underlying sweetness. Even the bad guys are portrayed as real, at least partially sympathetic, human beings (with the possible exception of Colonel Annoyu, a cardboard-cutout dictator who looks like Stalin). Mr. Oxboggle is a poignant figure who can't concentrate on his golf game because he's so upset about burdensome government regulation. Bob Forehead himself is almost a modern tragic hero, a man of simple and limited desires caught in a swirl of forces he only dimly understands. In addition to these plot elements, the crude amateurish appearance of the drawings contributes an amiable sense of self-effacement to the enterprise.

But the drawings only appear crude. The cartoon frames are crammed with jokes. In a lab testing the deadly "credit card bomb" that only kills people without credit cards (needed because the neutron bomb "kills people indiscriminately" and "could wipe out huge sectors of our international marketplace"), workers wear suits covered in cards labeled "Owe-Ever" and "Mega-Debt." A rat in a cage wears a "Procrasta-Charge" card. TV cameras in a press conference scene are labeled "WYAP Crashbang News" and "WXXX Maniac News" in throwaway parody of local television. The narrative is dense with humor, too, all wonderfully attuned to Washington nonsense. When Bob is told he'll have to give up his comic books when he enters Congress, he asks if they can be put "in escrow." Ginger Forehead gets into a cab and finds herself subjected by the cabbie to a detailed lecture on American-Tyranian relations. This sophistication (which plays so well off the silliness) is the second thing that puts Stamaty in a different league from a tired Washington jokester like Art Buchwald or a cloddish left-wing satirist like Barbara Garson.

A key Stamaty technique (if this doesn't sound too pompous) is to take some abstract perception about Washington and reify it. Thus, speaking of perceptions, which people in Washington do a lot, he creates the Maryland Institute of Perceptronics in Bethesda, which "has produced a significant percentage of behind-the-scenes manipulators of our present-day society." A "perceptual engineer" from this institution detects "an emerging perception of Bob as being purely image and lacking in substance," and recommends: "We've got to counter this 'purely-image' image with an image of Bob as having an in-depth grasp of issues." This is mockery of both the slick image-makers and the concerned commentators who drone on about the threat they pose to democracy. Grinning indifference, not moral outrage, is the sharpest weapon in Stamaty's arsenal. His target is less a particular side in the political debate than the Washington culture itself.

The arrival of this great social observer is another sign of Washington's maturity as a real capital. A while ago, there wouldn't have been enough grist, or enough of an audience. I used to think "Evans and Novak" was the funniest thing on the *Post* Op-Ed page. I've changed my mind.

MICHAEL KINSLEY

CARTOON BY MARK ALAN STAMATY

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TEN LAUGHS

The Best of Modern Humor edited by Mordecai Richler

(Knopf, 535 pp., $18.95)

I must forewarn those who read this review that I was put off some even before I began reading these selected writings, first by the title *The Best of Modern Humor* and then by the author's preface. To claim that one has selected the best of anything is to move to the edge of arrogance, if not beyond it.

My somewhat jaundiced view of the use of the word "best" to mark one's selections may come from political experience. Whenever recent Presidents of the United States have announced nominees to fill slots in their Administrations, they have claimed their designees are the best—better than all those other deserving persons who were so carefully considered in the course of a thorough search. This quest for the best turned up "The Best and the Brightest" of the Kennedy Administration; Spiro Agnew as Vice-President to Richard Nixon; Bert Lance as President Carter's Director of the Office of Management and Budget; and President Reagan's original Secretary of the Interior, James Watt. President Truman shunned the word "best," and he did not seek out the best people. He was generally well satisfied to find someone who was at least "good." From there, he moved to those whom he considered to be "damn good," and "G-damn good." On the negative scale he opened with "no good," moved to "no damn good," and finally to "no G-damn good."

Mordecai Richler might better have called his collection of humor simply *Good Modern Humor*. For that it certainly is.

After getting by the title I was again put on the defensive by the author's foreword, which was in itself a kind of review of the book. I prefer my books cold and unfurnished, but an anthology editor must have his say, I suppose, and Richler's preface serves as a useful base for criticism of the collection. Drawing on quotations from humorous writers like James Thurber, Woody Allen, and others, Mordecai Richler lays down some standards by which his work can be judged. He has done very well to exclude stories on the subject matters he was warned against by James Thurber—plumbers who are mistaken for physicians; adolescents who know more about sex than their parents; and so on. He needed more sensitive standards, however, than the rather obvious ones listed by Thurber.

I do not say that most of the themes and topics of the world of humor included in this collection should not have been there, but one of each of the following would have been enough: masturbation; lesbianism; experiences of upper-class English boys in the British public schools; Jewish mothers and the Yiddish factor; red-necks and the Southern dialect; takeoffs from opera or Shakespeare; Freud; modern marriage; plays on words (puns and surnames). I would say, too, that as a rule selections from longer works should be avoided. Under the best of conditions a collection of humor is likely to come out like a box of assorted chocolates—if not watched closely, even like a Whitman sampler, in which each piece, unique according to the chart on the box top, tastes just like the next one (especially if eaten within a limited period of time) and leaves an unpleasant aftertaste.

The ultimate criterion for selection, as noted by the author, was a somewhat subjective one, namely that each inclusion had to make him laugh, in some instances at seven o'clock in the morning. I admit I had my guard up; I did find myself, even so, laughing honestly and openly at about ten of the selections, and dryly, quietly, and with reservations at another ten. In the first group were Liebling, Perelman—who else—Meehan, Elkin, Friedman, Wilfred Sheed, V. S. Naipaul, Calvin Trillin, and Garrison Keillor. In the second group were Merken, Runyon, and Lardner (for old times' sake), Baker and Barthelme (for new times' sake), and Welty, Bellow, Allen, Lebowitz, and Geng (for some reason or other).

Had the author included Stephen Leacock's "Double Entry Bookkeeping" rather than "Gertrude the Governess or Simple Seventeen," I would have laughed at that, and certainly at any one of a number of the stories of J. F. Powers, whose writings—one at least—should be included in a collection of "good humor," "damn good humor," and even in a collection of the "best G-damn humor."

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TRB, *from page 4*

pool of "risk capital" available to small producers. This threatens the role of the major studios, which is why they're fighting it.

But it's really no big deal on either side. Syndication rights worth $800 million a year may be "at stake," as all the press reports say, but no one is going to get or keep these rights for free. If the networks get permission to re-enter this market, they will have to bargain for what they buy, and won't get anything unless they outbid everyone else. If the networks are kept out, they can still use their near-monopoly power to pay as little as possible for the shows they buy. This is a case where the government favor being fought over probably is worth less than the cost of the fight.

The networks offer up voluminous legal briefs, economic analyses, and other propaganda materials to rebut nasty charges that they stand to make a killing from the proposed change in rules. I'm convinced. But then why are they bothering? To read these documents, you would think that, while NBC, ABC, and CBS have nothing much to gain, a pro-network resolution of the syndication controversy is of vital importance to the National Urban Indian Council, the American Association of Homes for the Aging, and the American Chiropractic Association, among other interest groups that are reported to support the network position. The interest group auction is the most ridiculous and pointless aspect of these huge lobbying battles. I called up the United Rubber, Cork, Linoleum and Plastic Workers of America to ask what possible interest they could have in the outcome of this dispute. Without denying that they had endorsed the networks, nobody there could remember why.

The networks are endorsed by the National Council of La Raza, but the League of United Latin American Citizens supports the producers. LULAC says it had been assured by the networks that profits from syndication would lead to more Hispanics on TV, but switched sides when they came to doubt the sincerity of this improbable assertion. La Raza has held fast so far. The National Council of Negro Women told me that, whatever CBS may say, it has no opinion on the matter whatsoever, which happens to be the only opinion a group like theirs, or any responsible citizen, really ought to have.

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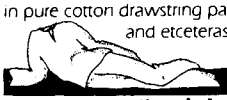

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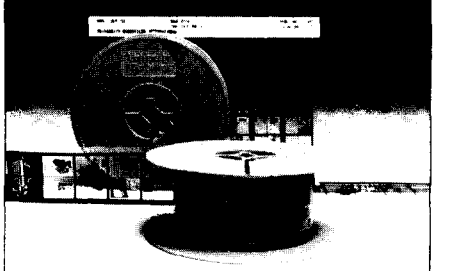

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PARIS DIARIST

Cradles to Graves

JACQUES CHIRAC, the conservative mayor of Paris, wants the French to make more babies. That was his message at the third annual conference on the family, and he's not the only one eager for infants in France. With fifty thousand fewer births this year than last, President Mitterrand is also said to be worried about unexpected sluggishness in the country's baby manufacturing sector. In France, fertility and the family are still old-fashioned issues. From all accounts, the conference in Paris sounded like a refreshingly straightforward affair compared to the White House Conference on Families I watched in Baltimore three years ago. No long arguments in France about how to define a family, about whether such a thing as a "single-person family" could be said to exist. The rallying cry, *Le Figaro* reported, was the bigger the brood, the better. Chirac didn't focus on the causes and implications of broken families—America's pressing problem. He talked instead about building families, and about how the Socialist government's policies supposedly work to discourage couples from getting down to the baby business in earnest. In fact, however, the French slowed down more than a century ago—long before there was a welfare state to influence their childbearing habits. Ever since then their rulers, associating population with power, have been prodding them to procreate—but with limited success. Ambitious citizens, it seems, think smaller families make nimbler social climbers. Census figures from as early as 1911 appear to clinch the case: they show matching low birthrates among journalists and concierges—two of the country's most power-hungry breeds, as any Frenchman would tell you.

BACK IN 1808 Balzac's father also had some thoughts on the subject of French fecundity. His worries, aired in a pamphlet I saw on a visit to his son the novelist's Loire Valley château, sound far more familiar and contemporary than Chirac's go-forth-and-multiply message. In his "Memorandum on the Scandalous Disorders brought about by Young Girls being Betrayed and Left Entirely Destitute," Bernard-François Balzac agonized about the predicament of unmarried mothers, who had no prospect of jobs and who could no longer claim an allowance from their children's fathers under the Code Napoléon. But that was in a lustier era, when French men and women were still susceptible to what Balzac *père* quaintly called "the overriding charms of reproduction."

THE CEMETERY of Père Lachaise is proof that it's graves, not cradles, the French really go for. No sign of underpopulation or self-restraint there, I discovered when I went looking for Balzac's tomb. The place is crowded with vainglorious mausoleums to otherwise unmemorable citizens—so crowded that even with the gatekeeper's map, it would have taken me at least a week to find my way to the real three-star sites, which range from Molière to Edith Piaf. Nestled among the sepulchers of the ever-ambitious French bourgeoisie, the tombs to the truly illustrious can't help looking modest. Ahead of me, a team of British students fanned out in systematic search of their favorite departed celebrities. A piercing whistle from one of the scouts, and they all came running to pay their respects to Balzac, whose marker is unexpectedly small. The Rodin sculpture commemorating "The Giant of French Literature" (as he is called in all the brochures) stops mid-chest—a mere bust for him, not an entire building. Neither the English explorers nor I, however, found a certain statue whose renown resides entirely below the waist. The bronze of Victor Noir—an obscure young journalist killed in the revolutionary tumult of 1870—draws more surreptitious admirers. Legend has it that women come stealthily to caress his trousers, and there's a rumor that the bronze below his belt really is well rubbed. The motive behind these missions is one that Jacques Chirac should approve: Noir is credited with the power to cure sterility.

THE SORBONNE was the site of another memorial, made of grandiose words instead of stones. A three-day conference called "Science and Peace: The Nobels' Answer" commemorated the hundred and fiftieth anniversary of Alfred Nobel's birth. (There's someone who really knew how to keep his name before the public.) Twenty-three Nobel Prize winners were invited to hold forth on the pressing issues of our time, and Parisians were urged to come listen. Taking a tourist's dispensation, I relied on the papers to keep me informed. *Le Monde* listed the arduous schedule, and I heaved a tired sigh for these "most prestigious savants in the world": they had a dilemma a day to resolve. First came "Technology: Illusion or Progress," then "Science Confronts Morality," then "Peace Through Arms." Facing the first, physicist Louis Neel was undaunted, but already I began to droop. "Technology has worked for the better," he announced, "and for the worse." Samuel Pisar, another participant, spoke even more boldly, and broadly. "The unthinkable is not impossible," he intoned (my eyelids grew heavier). If I had any lingering doubts about how dull the conference was, they disappeared when I read that the savants had to turn to a Soviet colleague for humor: laureate Nikolai Basov, the press reported, addressed the body on the titillating theme,"Everything You Wanted to Know About Controlled Thermonuclear Fusion But Were Afraid to Ask." (Alas, Basov had no such fearless answers to questions about human rights, posed in letters sent by Andrei Sakharov and Lech Walesa.) As I drifted off, I dreamed that one more luminary had arrived in time to make the closing remarks: Voltaire, who two hundred and fifty years ago provided the answer to the only real question that the conference raised: "why the greatest geniuses . . . have sometimes delivered the worst harangues." He had the answer ready in his letter "On Academies": "the reason for that is also very simple; it is that they have wanted to shine by seeking to treat worn-out matter in a new way. The obligation to speak, the awkwardness of having nothing to say and the desire to be brilliant are three things guaranteed to make even the greatest man ridiculous. Unable to find new ideas they have . . . talked without thinking, like people chewing on nothing and giving the appearance of eating while dying of starvation."

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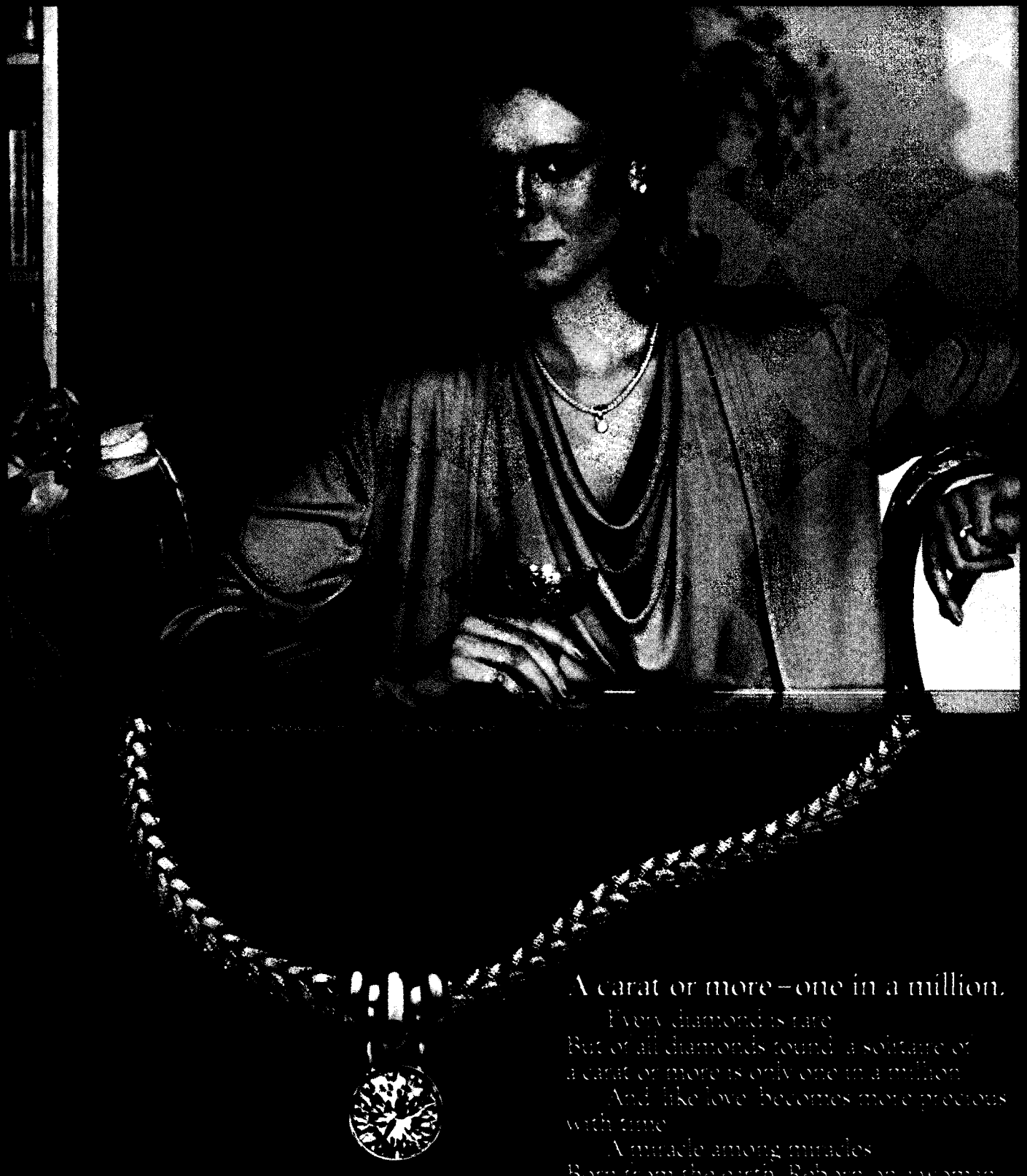

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